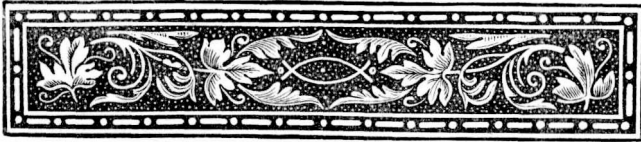


*Frank Simpson, Photo.*

*South Prospect of the City of Chester*

*From an old print.*



## The City Gilds of Chester: The Skinners and Feltmakers' Company

By FRANK SIMPSON, F.S.A.

*(Read 20th January, 1914)*



ALTHOUGH this Company ranks nineteenth on the list of the twenty-three existing City Companies, the Skinners, in point of antiquity, yield to few. Chester has always been noted for its skin-yards and tanneries. During the eighteenth century they were the leading staple trades of Chester, but to-day there is not a single skin-yard or tannery in the City.

Skins were shipped from here in great numbers. We have evidence of this in various Orders of the Privy Council such as:—

“An Order of the Privy Council dated 19<sup>th</sup> of February, 1629.

This shows that whereas the King's Progenitors had made divers grants to the Mayor & Cittizens of Chester to the use of the Company of Merchants there for Transportation of Calue skinnes from thence, the Creeke and members thereof; the said Mayor & cittizens, upon the expiration of the last grant, had deputed M<sup>r</sup> Gamull & others, to solicit another to the City, for the use of the said Merchants, as had been usual; the nature of which service these good Men mistaking, procured a grant to themselves, from M<sup>r</sup> Maxwell his late Majesties Patentee, &c. for transportation of 600 Dicker of Calue skinnis yearely from

the Porte of Chester. But upon a full hearing of this matter before their Lordships, it was declared by the said M<sup>r</sup> Gamull that the said grant was by him ever intended to be for the benefit of the said Company, in generall; and therefore their Lordships, by this Order took care that they should have the Benefit of it, or of a new grant in lieu thereof."

"A true Copie of his Majestie (K. James I.) License granted to James Maxwell Esq, for the buying and Transportinge of Calue-skinnes. This setteth forth, 'that as Queen Elizabeth had (in the 7<sup>th</sup> year of her Reigne) granted Free License to Arthur Balsano & others of his name yearly to export 6,000 Dickers of Leather of Calue-skinnes, accompting Ten dozen to every Dicker, for Seaven years; paying therefore 5 shillings for every Dicker; so he now grants to James Maxwell Esq License to export Annually 18,000 such Dickers of Leather and Calue-skinnes during the term of 21 yeares; at the same price or Rent of 5 shillings per Dicker. This Grant bears Teste 12 June Anno Regni Angliae &c.'"<sup>1</sup>

Furs were anciently of very great value and high mark of distinction, according to the kinds worn. They were known to the Anglo-Saxons, but were brought into more general use by the Normans.

The wardrobe account of Edward I. only mentions fur of goats and lambs.<sup>2</sup> The charter of 1 Edward III. shows the use of furs to have been, at that time, much more prevalent. It speaks of the fur of mineva, bison, stradling, and others.

The statute of 11 Edward III. confirms the wearing of fur in their apparel to the royal family, and to the prelates and ladies; and people of Holy Church which might spend by year C<sup>ii</sup> [£100] of their benefices at

<sup>1</sup> *Harleian MSS.*, 2004, 733, 735.

<sup>2</sup> *Furruar de Bof et Agnia.*

the least. In later years the use of furs as well as their variety became greatly extended, and at the present time they form—in a greater or lesser degree—part of every woman's wardrobe, and not infrequently of men's also.

Speaking of the Skinners, Strype says:—

“This Company flourished in former times, when sables, lucernes, and other rich furs, were worn for tippets in England.”

The well known authority Henry Lane informs us:—

“Coney skins, and other furs of the breed of this realm were in these times by such as had them of their own breed, and such as gathered them—pedlars and such like—ordinarily brought and offered to be sold to the skinners; and the skinners bought the same at reasonable rates, and then, out of such skins and furs, chose out and culled what were fit for wear within the realm, and caused them to be dressed, and set the poor on work; and so had by choice and plenty wherewith to serve the nobles, gentlemen, and other subjects of England. The residue of the furs and skins so come to hand they vended to every man as fitted his trade; and to the merchants, such as were fit to be sent beyond sea.”

The importance here attached to rabbit skins, and their mention to be worn by “Nobles and Gentlemen,” shows that the richer furs, of foreign origin, were in but little use even at that late period; yet they invariably appear in the portraits of persons of distinction in the reign of Henry VIII.

About a century ago, there was a local incorporation called the Corporation of Juan. It had existed from time immemorial, but no data exist by which to trace its origin. Hanshall says:—

“A very respected member of this Company, in 1817, informed me he had been told by those who

had preceded him, that the name had its origin from Spain, from skins being brought from the plains of Juan, in that country, to be dressed at Chester, from which circumstances the skinnners eventually were called the Company and Corporation of Juan."

The writer goes on to say:—

"An election takes place for the office of Mayor of Juan annually; the senior apprentice is generally the person made choice of. It was customary a few years ago, for the newly elected Mayor of Juan, attended by his officers, preceded by a fiddler, and drum and fife, to proceed to the Exchange to pay his compliments to the Mayor of the City, where his Worship of Juan, and Brethren, were generally treated with half-a-pint of wine each. This formality still exists."

The Feltmakers regulated the manufacture and sale of felt-hats. They took particular care, however, that the Haberdashers—who sold straw-hats—did not sell any made of felt, unless the person offering them had been specially apprenticed to a Feltmaker.

#### CHARTER.

There is no account in the books of a Charter having been granted at any time to the Skinnners or Feltmakers.

In the Report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations in England and Wales, printed 30th March, 1835, speaking of this Company it is stated:—

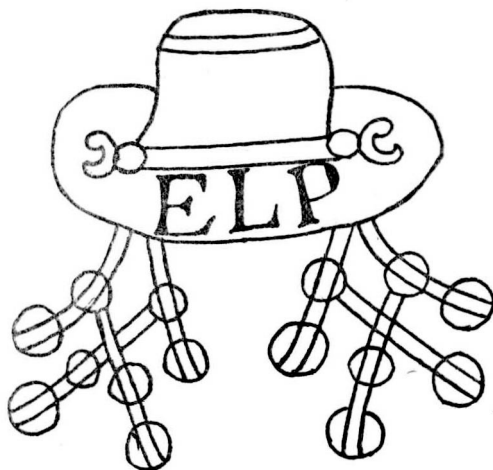
"They have no charters,<sup>3</sup> but have always been considered an incorporated company, although no entry in

<sup>3</sup> In *Chester during the Plantagenet and Tudor Periods*, pp. 410-11, the Author says:—" . . . and he [the Black Prince, 6 May, 44, Edward III.] granted to the Skinnners, Shoemakers, and Tanners, a charter for the joint exercise of the three crafts," and five lines further on he again speaks of "the Skinnners and Shoemakers" being granted "a new charter from Henry IV., 1410." He has evidently misread the charters, as they apply to the Cordwainers, not the Skinnners.

their books distinctly describes them as such. An extract from the Mayor's Book at Chester 2, Henry VII. [1486] was produced relating to such company."

#### THE REGISTERS

The old books of the Skinners and Feltmakers' Company are lost; but the Company has still in its possession two registers, or minute books, and one receipt or stamp book. Of the former, the first volume is of folio size and measures 12 inches in depth and  $7\frac{3}{4}$  inches in width; it is bound in full morocco, and has the remains of two brass clasps attached to it. It is composed of hand-made paper in which is a watermark resembling a cardinal's hat, the old crest of the Feltmakers' Company. A number of blank (?) pages have been torn out at the end of the book.



This volume deals principally with the rules and orders of the Company. There is no account of receipts or disbursements entered in it. On both front and back of the cover is inscribed in gilt letters:—

“The Company of Feltmakers.”

The Orders continue to be entered in this book until 1795.

The second volume is of folio size, and measures  $12\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth and 8 inches in width. This appears to have been purchased in 1714, for we find:—

“March 30, 1714., Paid for the new book „ 5 „  
 Paid for writing the  
 Company’s names „ 1 „”

This book has been enlarged several times by the insertion of additional sheets. The first 317 pages bear a water-mark representing a circular fence of palisading, with a closed three barred gate. In the centre of the area a rampant lion crowned, holding in dexter paw a scimitar elevated, and in the sinister an hour-glass? Sitting within the fence, on the right side, a young woman holds with her right hand uplifted, a staff poising a felt hat. Below that the words “Pro Patria”—“For my country.”





From page 317 to page 360 the paper is lighter in colour, and bears as a watermark the maker's name, M. Corbett, 1808. From page 360 to the end of the book the paper is again of a different make bearing two watermarks, and the date 1840.

The book is composed of hand-made paper bound in full calf, evidently subsequent to the latter date. It bears on the cover a red leather label, on which is impressed in gilt lettering:—

“Skinners & Feltmakers Company  
 THOMAS MARSDEN } Aldermen  
 JOHN LAITHWAITE }  
 WILLIAM SMITH } Stewards”  
 JOHN LOWE }

Unfortunately it bears no date, neither is there any account in the disbursements as to when the book was enlarged and re-bound; nor does there appear to be one particular year in which these gentlemen jointly acted in the official capacity above stated.

June 13th, 1848, John Leithwaite and Humphrey Middleton were elected Aldermen for the ensuing year, and William Smith and John Lowe, Stewards. May 1st, 1852, Thomas Marsden and Alexander Humphries were elected Aldermen, and William Smith and John Lowe, Stewards for the ensuing year. It seems therefore probable that the book was enlarged in one or other of these years. John Leithwaite appears to have died in 1853.

On the first page are:—

“The names of the Aldermen and Stewards with the rest of the brethren of the Company of felt-makers and Skinners within the Cittie of Chester the 1<sup>st</sup> of Aprill 1714.

M<sup>r</sup> RICHARD DEWSBURY } Aldermen  
 M<sup>r</sup> JONATHAN GOLDSON }

M <sup>r</sup> JOHN CLAYTON	} Stewards
M <sup>r</sup> BENJAMIN PRICE	
John Stringer	Maior
M <sup>r</sup> John Dewsbury	
M <sup>r</sup> Roger Thomason	
M <sup>r</sup> Thomas Bennett	
M <sup>r</sup> Peter Wrench	
M <sup>r</sup> James Dewsbury	
M <sup>r</sup> Peter Shaw	
M <sup>r</sup> William Gibbons	
M <sup>r</sup> Josiah Richardson	
M <sup>r</sup> Henry Burrows	
M <sup>r</sup> Thomas Bridge	
M <sup>r</sup> John Cawley	
M <sup>r</sup> Joseph Smith	
M <sup>r</sup> Peter Parry	
M <sup>r</sup> Thomas Jennions	
M <sup>r</sup> Peter Darwell	
M <sup>r</sup> John Hayworth.	

A detailed list of expenditure is given each year until 1799.

The Receipt, or Stamp Book, measures about eight inches by six inches, and is bound in full calf. A red leather label on the cover bears the names of the Aldermen and Stewards, and the date:—

“J. DEWSBURY	} Aldermen
TH <sup>o</sup> BRIDGE	
P. WRIGHT	} Stewards
J. POOLE	
	1721.”

In the disbursements for the year 1721 we find:—

“May 29. Paid for a new Book for y<sup>e</sup>  
stamps “ 5 ””

Although the book was only purchased in 1721, a number of certificates of earlier date have been inserted. The earliest being dated 1st August, 1698, and that of

“William Gibbons who was admitted a Brother the  
12 day of Sept<sup>r</sup> 1699.”

This book is in use at the present time.

May 13th, 1736, there is an entry:—

“P<sup>d</sup> for a paper Book to M<sup>r</sup> Potter            o 2 6”

but the purpose for which the book was purchased is  
not stated.

#### THE OATHES.

“The Oathes of the Aldermen, Stewardest and  
Brothers w<sup>th</sup> the Constitutions and Orders and  
Ordinances of y<sup>e</sup> Worshipful Societie and Company  
of the Skinners and Feltmakers of the Cittie of  
Chester as hereafter followeth:—Written by George  
Bellin who was Chosen and made Clarke of our  
Companie at our Meeting houlden in the Comon hall  
of the same Cittie the Eleventh day of Maye Anno  
Dom 1615 in the yeare of the Reigne of our soveraigne  
Lord James by the Grace of God of England, Scot-  
land, france and Ireland Kinge Defender of the  
faith &c. That is to saie of England, france and  
Ireland y<sup>e</sup> thirteenth, and of Scotland the eight and  
fortieth.

M<sup>r</sup> William Throppe the elder Skinner and M<sup>r</sup>  
Robert ffletcher Junior feltmaker, the two Aldermen.  
Robert Damatt and William Wildigge the two  
Stewards.”

#### THE OATH OF THE ALDERMAN.

“I shalbe true to the Society and Company of  
Skinners and ffeltmakers within the Cittie of Chester,  
And their counsell keepe And the good Governm<sup>t</sup> of  
the same Company well and faithfullie mainteyne  
with all my mighte and power And doe my Dilligence  
and endeavour to see the good orders and decrees  
made And to be made by the Aldermen, Stewards,  
and Company of Skinners and ffeltmakers within the  
saide Cittie or by y<sup>e</sup> more part of them, well and

truely performed maintained and kept And assiste & further to the uttermost of my power y<sup>e</sup> Stewards of the same Companye w<sup>th</sup> in the saide Cittie in due execution of theirre office, or in any other matters or causes which they shall take in hand & Attempte or p<sup>r</sup>sent for the Common wealth or Benefit of the saide Company. And therein yeilde them my best advise, help, assistance and countenance from time to time. And at all times as the cause shall requier. And shall not receive any Brother into the saide Company without the Consent and admittance of the same Company or the greater part of them. And shall and will doe and p<sup>r</sup>forme all other things needfull and requisite for the benefit and behoofe of the sayde Society and Company And y<sup>e</sup> good government theirreof soe long as I shalbe Alderman. Soe helpe me God and by Jesus Christ.”

#### THE OATH OF THE STEWARDS.

“I shall be true to the Society and Company of Skinners and Feltmakers w<sup>th</sup> in ye Cittie of Chester & theirre councell keepe and y<sup>e</sup> good government of y<sup>e</sup> same Company well and faithfully maintein w<sup>th</sup> all my might and power, and doe my dilligence and endeavour to cause the orders and dec<sup>r</sup>es made and to be made by the Alderman, Stewards and Company of Skinners and Feltmakers within the saide Cittie or the greater part of them for y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>r</sup>fitte and Benefite of y<sup>e</sup> saide Company well and truly performed mainteyned & kept from time to time and at all times as the cause shall require And shall and will yeilde up and give a true and juste accompte of all and singular such some and somes of money as I shall require and disburse for or on the behalfe of the said Company unto the Aldermen of the sayde Company for the time being And to such others of the same Companye and at such time and place as

y<sup>e</sup> said Company or the greater parte of them shall limmite and appoint And shall in all things Els duely and truely execute the office of Stewards of the same Company soe long as I shall remayne Stewarde thereof And shall & will during the same-time doe and performe all other things needfull and requisite for y<sup>e</sup> benefit and behoofe of y<sup>e</sup> same Company and y<sup>e</sup> good government theire of. Soe help me God and by Jesus Christ.”

THE OATH OF EVERY BROTHER.

“For asmuch as it appeareth unto us heare psente that your humble request unto us made is y<sup>t</sup> wee woulde accepte you into this our Company And that wee woulde admit and take you into the same Company as a member of the same.

You shall therefore Swear by all mightie God that you wilbe faithfull and true to y<sup>e</sup> same Company and shalbe obediente and duetifull to the elders of this our Company And you shall conceale keep secrett and not disclose such Counsell as at any time here after shalbe used and spoken of by or amongst the saide Company at any of our Assemblies or Meetings being lawfull and honest And apperteyning to the p<sup>r</sup>fit of y<sup>e</sup> said Company or the redress or reformation of any disorders or abuses committed against y<sup>e</sup> saide Company or against the benifite or good government there of And in case your be havour touching the saide Company or any member thereof shalbe disorderly soe as the same Company or the greater number thereof shall think you eyther finable or punishable for the same Then you shall stande too and abaye and abide such order and decree as shalbe set downe in y<sup>t</sup> behalfe and shall in due time truely pay all & singular such fines as shalbe assessed againste you for or by reasons of any such disorder or abuse & you shall alsoe beare and

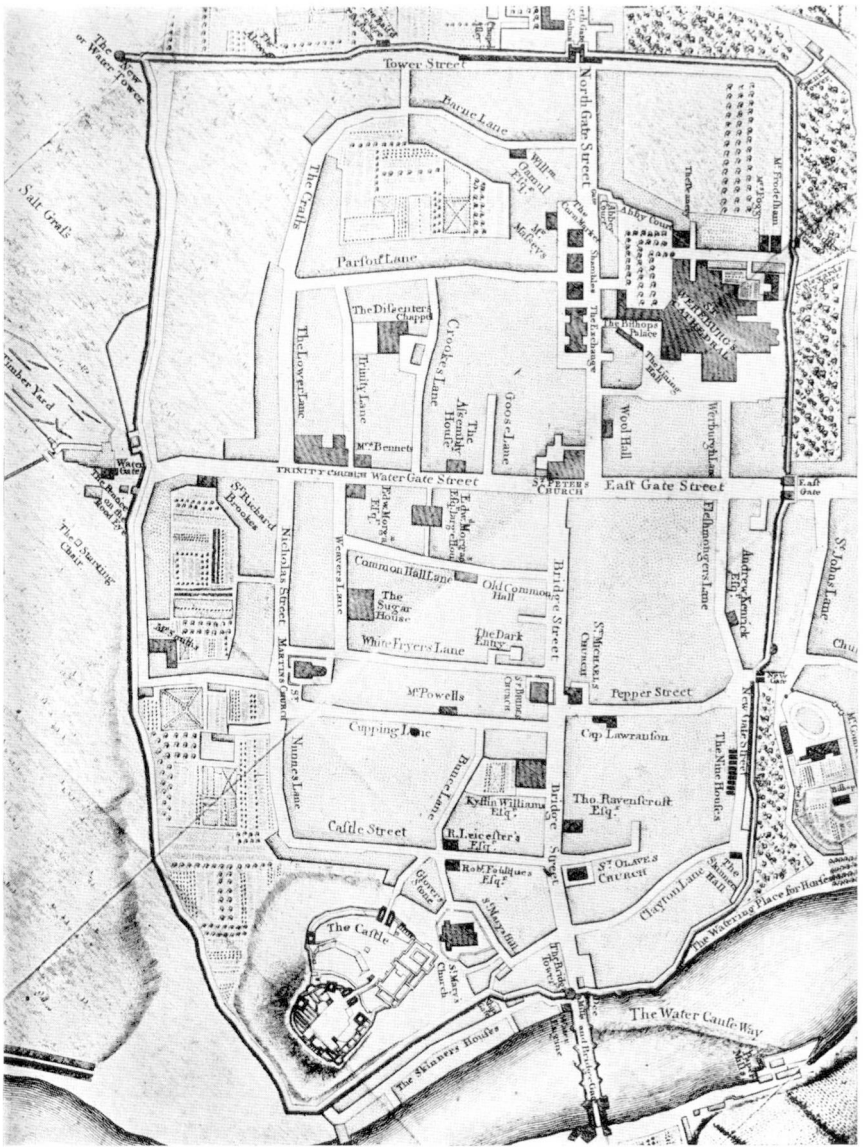
pay Scott and lott according to your having And all orders and decrees made and to be made by the Aldermen Stewards and Company in the saide Cittie or the greater parte of them You shall from time to time, and at all times, well and faithfully observe, maintaine and keepe to the uttermost of your power. And you shall come to all meetings and Assemblies to be made by the said Company or the greater part of them upon due warning thereof unto you given by the Stewardest of the said Company for the time being, or eyther of them unless you have reasonable and juste cause through sickness or other wise to the contrarie which you shall make knowne, and give notice of unto y<sup>e</sup> Aldermen and Stewardest of the same Companie for the time being or to some of them And you shall at every such assemblie or Meeting give and yeilde your best advise and counsell for and touching the good governmente and comon wealth of the same company of Skinners and feltmakers within the saide Cittie so often as you shalbe there unto required And all things concerning the good rules and Civell Government of the same Company you shall well and truly performe to the uttermost of your power Soe help you God in Jesus Christ 1615."

About 1731 the Company decided to shorten the Oaths, which was accordingly done. These are in use at the present time:—

#### OATH OF THE ALDERMEN.

"I shall be true to our Sovereign Lord the King of England &° to his Heires and Successors and unto the Maior of the same Citty for his year Being, and also to be ready at all times Lawfull to go speak and give my best advice and council for the wealth of the occupation of Skinners and Feltmakers of the said Citty, and for to see that all good orders





Frank Simpson, Photo.

Lavaux's Plan of the City of Chester  
 (showing the Skippers' Hall in Clayton Lane, now known as Duke Street)



and good Rules be kept and maintained to the uttermost of my power Bearing no more favour to one Person then to Another, But in all things to do Uprightly Justice and Truly So help me God."

THE STEWARDS AND CLERKS' OATH.

"I shall be ready at all times Lawfull with the good Advice of my Aldermen and Brethren of our Occupations and to warn Geather Receive and take all such fines and profitts as Belongeth unto our Occupations of Skinners and Feltmakers or in any wise thereunto Appertaineth or Belongeth without any favour Bearing more unto one Brother then to another Either for Meed or Dred and for to give a true Account of the same Before my said Alderman and Brethren of our said Occupations at our Day accustomed. So help me God."

THE OATH OF EVERY BROTHER.

"I shall be faithfull and true to the Societie and Company of Skinners and feltmakers within the Cittie of Chester. And the same Company maintayne with all my power. I shall reverance my Elders, and the secrets of the said Company at their Assemblies and Meetings Well and trulie shall keepe, and all good and lawfull Orders heare to fore made or heare after to bee made for the Common Wealth of the said Company I shall well and trulie performe Soe helpe me God &c."

THE MEETING HOUSE.

In Lavaux's plan of Chester, published about 1748, the Skinners' Hall is shown at the extreme end, south side, of Clayton Lane, now known as Duke Street. Part of the actual building is still to be seen, almost abutting on the Walls. It is now divided, and occupied as cottages. A glance at this house with its centre gable and stone facings at once tells us that, like many other historic houses in Chester, it had

seen better days. The Meeting House is regularly mentioned in the Company's books, but the exact site is not given. The Company frequently held its Meetings at the Common Hall, for which they paid one shilling for hire, and one shilling to the Hall-keeper; sixpence being regularly paid on these occasions for carrying the chest.

The Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company met at the Common Hall in 1636, and purchased it in 1699. They retained possession until 1778, when it was sold to a Mr. Charles Bromfield. In that Company's books is a list of the other Companies who became their tenants and held Meetings there, but the Skinners and Feltmakers are not mentioned. It is evident, therefore, that they had their own hall, but hired the Common Hall for special occasions; according to the Company's books they met there for the first time in 1615.

In the Report of the Royal Commission for 1835 it is stated:—

“They [the Skinners, &c.] have no property and meet in the Common Hall of the City.”

That they had no property at that time probably was the case, but according to the Company's minutes, the Annual Meeting for 1834 was held at Mr. Alexander Booth's<sup>4</sup> house, in Eastgate Street; and continued to be held there during the three following years.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Booth was admitted to the Company April 10th, 1817. He was one of the Aldermen of the Company during the years named, 1834-7. He was one of the most prominent tradesmen in the City, and employed a number of hands, male and female; his establishment occupied the site on which now stand the premises of Messrs. Day & Son, Tobacconists, and part of the Sig-ar-ro Stores, Eastgate Street (North). He resided in the house above, now occupied as offices by Messrs. Warmsley & Co. It was formerly a half-timbered building, but according to a slate slab fixed in the rear wall of the present building, it was rebuilt in the year 1827.

B

Inscribed in the slab is A E  
1827

The Common Hall was converted into a dwelling house in 1806. The site in Duke Street is where one would expect to find the Company's Hall; as in other towns in which this industry was prominent, men following the trade of skinnners were assigned a certain locality in the City in which to ply their trade, and reside; they thus became associated for the purpose of mutual advantage and protection. In Chester the skinnners were located by the river side, near the Bridge-Gate. Formerly, they had their sheds and drying grounds extending from near the Ship-gate along part of what is now known as the "Little Roodee." The industry still throve there as late as 1760, and it was not until 1828 that the sheds were swept away, when the County Authorities determined to purchase the property, and enclose it within the boundary of the Castle. The Walls, at this part, were then diverted from their original course, to the river edge, and a massive wall was erected which formed the boundary of the County Gaol. This was completed about 1832, at the time the Grosvenor Bridge was erected. This wall was taken down 1900-1, and a new road called "Castle Drive" or "Skinners Lane" made through the site. That the old name still remains is a matter of congratulation.

There was, also, a skinner's yard on the opposite side of the river, east of the bridge. This was formerly occupied by Messrs. Topham, and later by Messrs. Jones & Rock, who dealt principally with sheep-skins. This yard was done away with about twenty years ago.

In the accounts for 1755 we find:—

"April 1. Paid by M<sup>r</sup> Gouldson for skins  
taken up at the River tide

o 5 o

	Paid to Alderman Walley for do	o	2	o
	„ to M <sup>r</sup> Pemberton for do	o	1	6
	For cutting the same	o	1	o
Nov 6	Paid for Prosecuting Martha Hol- loway for starling [? stealing] skins from M <sup>r</sup> Alderman Walley	o	5	o
June 6	Received for the stuff which came of the skins that was taken up at the River side	1	3	3”

## ADMISSION TO THE COMPANY.

The rules for admission to this Company were similar to those of the other Companies,<sup>5</sup> but the fees, at different times, varied in amount.

“The 17<sup>th</sup> of November Anno Domini 1691

It is this Day and yeare aboue said Ordered and agreed upon by the Consent and vote of the Company at our meeting held at the Common Hall That what money soe ever shall bee payd by any pson for the time to Come for his admittance of a brother into our Company of Skinners and feltmakers shall bee kept by the Stewards for the use of the Company for the time to come.”

This Order was repealed August 30th, 1715.

At a Meeting held April 21st, 1778:—

“It was unanimously agreed by the whole Company of Skinners & Feltmakers That every person or persons who have a right to come unto our Company by servitude only shall from and after this day pay the sum of Twenty pounds for his or their admission into our said Company.

Also at the same Meeting it was agreed by a majority of our said Company that every Brother's Son or Sons who have already neglected to take up their Freedom of our said Company shall from and

<sup>5</sup> See “History of Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers,” pp. 44-5, by F. Simpson.

after this day pay for his or their admission the like sum of twenty pounds And also it was agreed at the same Meeting that no person shall be admitted into our said Company until he is arrived to the full age of Twenty one years

EDWARD BURROWES	}	Ald <sup>n</sup>
THO <sup>s</sup> JONES		
WILL HEBROW	}	Stewd <sup>s</sup>
JN <sup>o</sup> TOWSEY JUN <sup>r</sup>		

[and six other members].

About the year 1800, the fee was reduced to £10 plus the stamp; and thirty years later it was again reduced, the charge being £3 4/-.

This Company, about half a century ago, had several members who followed one or other of its titular trades; but at the present time there is not a single skinner or feltmaker (hat-maker) in the Company. This is not exceptional, as a number of the Chester Companies, including the Barber-Surgeons, the Saddlers, the Glovers, the Tanners, the Grocers and Ironmongers, and the Weavers, have not a single member of these respective occupations. This also applies to trade gilds, or companies, in other towns and cities, including London, Coventry, etc.

From 1832 to 1870, all the members of the Company, with the exception of Benjamin Dimelo, had served their apprenticeship to Alexander Booth.

#### ATTENDING THE MEETINGS.

##### RULE IV.

“December 3, 1681,

Imprimus That every brother of the saide Company shall upon due warninge geven unto him, or in his absence, to anye of his folks or servants, by the Stewardest or by either of them or by anye other in their absence appointed by the Aldermen for

that service for the warning of any an Assembly or meeting of the same Companies att y<sup>e</sup> place appoynted shall not at any time or times absente himselfe from meeting without a lawfull cause where of hee or they shall make the Aldermen and Stewardes or some of them acquainted with and to desire his excuse, or else to paie for everye absence unto the saide companie in the name of a fine the some of 3<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> p<sup>r</sup>vided alwayes that the same houre appointed for meeting geven by the Stewardes bee observed and kepte in paine of the forfeiture of the like fine aboue saide 3<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup>”

The above fines were at a later period reduced to sixpence, but were, eventually, increased to one shilling.

“It is further ordered and agreede upon by the same Company that if it shall happen at any time hereafter when such occasions shall fall out for the warning of a Meeting by the two Stewards to bee donne by the appoynt<sup>mt</sup> of the Aldermen or by one of them That if it shall soe happen by negligence or forgetfullness of the Stewards or by eyther of them doe not warne every Brother of the same Company to such meeting and assembly or at the leaste to leave words at their shoppes or houses w<sup>th</sup> some of their people to certifie unto them the Daye time and houre of the same meeting every steward for offending to pay in the name of a fine for the Companies use in money .. .. . 12<sup>d</sup>”

“It is further agreed upon by the saide company that there shall not any Brother of the saide Company Departe from their place of meeting upon any their businesse excepte he firste aske leave of the Aldermen for the time being. In paine of forfeiting for every such offence the some of—without mittigacon. .. .. . 3 4”

“Alsoe it is further agreed upon that at the Riseing

and breaking up at every our meetinge and assemblies that every of the saide Brothers shall take his place according to his time and office and soe from the Meetinge house Dore to goe in order by two and two in Rancke till they come to the Milke Stooopes, and soe to departe everyman to his affares or business hee that doth contrary to this order to paye for every offence in money" [no sum named].

The Milk Stoups were situated on the north side of Eastgate Street, near the Cross; upon taking down the old premises of Messrs. Ambrose Williams, and Oakes & Griffiths, to erect the new timbered premises now occupied by Messrs. Richard Jones & Sons, there was in the rear a building framed of oak and pegged together. The ground floor was about seven feet higher than the level of the street. Upon removing this the débris below was found to contain a number of pieces of mediæval pottery; there were also the remains of some shippens. In two stalls the oak divisions and the irons to which the cows were fastened still remained. Between the stalls was a quantity of cow-dung, and upon clearing this away the workmen came upon the smooth surface of the rock, which was about on a level with Eastgate Street. It was in front of the timbered building alluded to that the workmen found the Roman lead piping, October 9th, 1899, bearing the Agricola inscription,<sup>6</sup> now exhibited in the Archæological Room of the Grosvenor Museum.

RULE V.

"Dec 3 1681

It is this day ordered That if any Brother of our Company doe at any time hereafter either Rashly

<sup>6</sup> See *Catalogue of Roman Inscribed and Sculptured Stones*, pp. 86-7, Haverfield.

Swear or Curse in the Meeting house for every such offence hee shall pay to y<sup>t</sup> Stewardest for the use of the Company .. .. . 12<sup>d</sup>”

“It is further ordered concluded and agreed upon with the wholl consente of all the said societie and Company that there shall not anie brother of the same Company behave himselfe disorderly amongst anie of his said brethren or towards anie of them in their saide meeting house at any of our assemblies, nor to disturb or interrupte anie of the same brethren in the tellinge of their tale or matters before the Aldermen the Stewards and the reste of the brethren but every man at such time to be silente and to give eare for the speedier endinge of anye such matters or causes then in hearinge. Neither any brother of the same companie shall call any of his said Brethren worse than his, or their, proper name or names in any wrath or anger, neither in our meeting house nor in any other place But every brother to take his place accordinge to his time And likewise to behave themselves one towards another, lovingly gentlie, quietlie and in the feare of God and to be ruled and concerned for the benefite and lawfull good of the same Societie and Companie by the advice of the Aldermen, the Stewardest and the greater pte of the same Companie In paine of the forfeiture [for] every offence in such cause Contrarie to this order to paie in the name of a fine for the companies use in money the sum of .. .. . 5<sup>s</sup>”

It appears quite evident that the above order was not always carried out, as eight years later:—

“It is ordered and agreed by the generall Consent of our Company at our Meeting held ano 1689 Aprill the 13<sup>th</sup> y<sup>t</sup> the skimmers bretheren of our said Company shall to the best of our assistance be Wrighted of all abuses y<sup>t</sup> shall by any unlawfull meanes bee



offered to the said skidders by any of our said Company of Skidders and feltmakers.”

“October y<sup>e</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 1721

Att our Meeting held in y<sup>e</sup> Common Hall it is put to publick vote whether John Clayton shall goe downe out of y<sup>e</sup> hall or not

Shall goe / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /  
Shall not / / /”

“February 20<sup>th</sup> 1721 [1722]

Memorand y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Company of feltmakers And Skidders doe unanimously Agree that John Clayton Brother of y<sup>e</sup> said Company shall pay as a foyn<sup>e</sup> y<sup>e</sup> sume of twenty shillings for abusive words given in y<sup>e</sup> publick Pentice Upon y<sup>e</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Feb<sup>r</sup> 1721 to Thomas Bridge Aldermen of y<sup>e</sup> said Company.

It is further agreed y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> said John Clayton shall not be admitted into our Company Untill he hath paid y<sup>e</sup> above mentioned foyn<sup>e</sup> of Twenty shillings for y<sup>e</sup> above mentioned abuse given to Alderman Bridge.”

“It is further ordered and agreed upon w<sup>th</sup> the wholl consente of all the saide Companie That their shall not any Brother of the same companie of feltmakers and skidders commence anie action or sute in law againste any of their saide brethren of the saide company for anie matter either of Debte or accompte or what other matter soever before hee have made the Aldermen of the saide companie acquainted there with: for [so?] that the same causes and controversies maie be taken up and ended by the saide Aldermen and Stewards and Companie as it may soe bee upon paine unto everie one that doth contrary to this order to pay for his fine the some of twenty shillings. Provided all waies that if the Aldermen the Stewards and Companie cannot end the saide Controversies then the p<sup>t</sup>ies to be at their libertie to seeke their right else where.”

## PROTECTION OF TRADE.

The Company was very careful in protecting the crafts forming its Gild, and prompt to suppress any outsiders, or non-freemen, following their trade in the City.

“July the 27<sup>th</sup> 1675

It is this Day ordered and agreed upon by a full voyce of the Brethren of our Company at our meeting held at the Common hall That noe brother of our Company shall sell or cause to bee sould any straw hat or chip hat after the fifth of November next ensuing but if y<sup>t</sup> any brother of our Company shall sell or pmit to be sould for his use or benefit any straw hat or chip hat Contrary to this p<sup>s</sup>ent order of agreement made and concluded upon the day and yeare aboue sayd y<sup>t</sup> for every default of any one of our Brethren soe offending shall pay unto the stewards of our Company in the name of a fine for the use of the Companie the sume of twentie shillings .. .. . 20<sup>s</sup>

RICH: WRIGHT Maior	}	Aldermen
JOHN POOLE		
RALPH R BOULTON	}	Stewards”
HUMPHREY CAPPICK		

[and 19 of the brethren].

“Item. it is ordered and agreed upon this p<sup>s</sup>ent Day and yeare beinge the 7<sup>th</sup> of ffebruary Anno 1620 that there shall not any brother of our company at any time or times heareafter sett any stranger or any other pson on Worke at the trade of feltmaking or trimming of hats or making of hat bands w<sup>th</sup>in the Cittie of Chester or w<sup>th</sup>in the liberties of the same Cittie w<sup>th</sup>out the Consent of the Aldermen and Stewards for their time being and all soe that noe brother of our Company shall not buy w<sup>th</sup> any such psones and every brother that doth contrary to this

order shall pay for a fine for such Defaulte soe Committed tenn shillings w<sup>th</sup>out any mittigaçõn 10<sup>s</sup>”

“The 17<sup>th</sup> of December Anno Doñi 1694

It is this Day and yeare aboue said ordered and agreed upon by the consent and vote of the Company at our Meeting held at the Coñon Hall the day and yeare aboue said That noe man shall have any Commerse Traide or Dealing w<sup>th</sup> any man that shall sett up w<sup>th</sup>in three miles of the City of Chester nor noe man to set up Stale or flaike in the street of y<sup>e</sup> said Cittie neither at the ffaire or market but to dispose of his goods at his shope or house hee keeps all the yeare.

It is further ordered condensed and agreed upon by y<sup>e</sup> consent of our Company at y<sup>e</sup> fore said time at our meeting that in case any journeyman as hath wrought w<sup>th</sup> any Master of our said Company goes to worke w<sup>th</sup> any ffeltmaker as sets up w<sup>th</sup>in three miles of the cittie afore said that noe Master shall sett the same journey man on worke after his Departure from the fore said Master for the space of six months on the penalty of .. 5 0 0”

“March the 31<sup>st</sup> 1730

It was then ordered and agreed By the whole Consent of the Company of Skinners and Feltmakers that if any Brother of the said Company shall after the Date hereof Lend any of his working tools to make hats withall to anyone that is not a Brother of the said Company and he be fully Convicted of the said offence he shall for the same pay to the Stewards of the Company as a foyne for the use of the Company the sum of five pounds of currant English money for every such offence.”

Although these rules as to trading were very stringent, and the fines heavy, cases were continually being brought before the Mayor for breach of the

same. The day following the fairs Chester must have been very brisk, as each of the Companies had their Aldermen and Stewards, accompanied by the Sheriff, and the Mayor's Officer, busily engaged in arresting the non-freemen, and others not members of a Company, offering goods for sale.

Nicholas Cooper had a busy time in arresting, on behalf of the Feltmakers, those selling felt hats, for in the Company's books we find year after year items such as the following:—

“ 1715	Paid Nicholas Cooper for taking up		
	the straw hats	o	1 o
	Spent at taking up the straw hat men	o	1 5
1751	August Paid M <sup>r</sup> Linkford for going		
	to forworn the strangers for keeping		
	the fair	o	1 o”

Perhaps two of the greatest offenders were Zachariah Smith and Cotton Probert.

The former set up as a feltmaker in Boughton. As he was not a Freeman, he was warned by the Company that proceedings would be taken against him if he continued to sell felt-hats. The visits of the Aldermen and Stewards had no effect, and Mr. Smith continued trading. At a Meeting held in the Common-hall, March 6th, 1731,

“It was ordered by the consent of the whole Company of Skinners & Feltmakers that not any Brother of our Company shall Implye any Jorneyman that he knoweth hath worked with M<sup>r</sup> Zachary Smith Then set up the trade of Feltmaking in Boughton, for the space of six months after the said Jorneyman hath left the said Zacharey Smith, the said Brother thus offending shall forfeit as a foyne for the use of the Company the sum of five pounds for all such offences.”

Four years later the Company sent a man to purchase a felt hat from Smith, which he succeeded in doing, for we find:—

“June 25, 1735.

Paid for a hat Brought from Zachariah Smith after 12 o'clock the same day	„	1	4
June 25. Paid for an action for arresting M <sup>r</sup> Smiths Goods		0	2 0
P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Williams a Maiores porter for arresting the goods		0	5 0
July 4 P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Jones a Retaining fee		0	10 6
Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Walleys examining the books		0	4 11
13 P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> John Williams our Attorney for careing the seut against M <sup>r</sup> Zachariah Smith		0	12 10
14. P <sup>d</sup> to M <sup>r</sup> Lawrence Gawther a fee against Smith		0	3 6
24 P <sup>d</sup> to M <sup>r</sup> Williams a Maiors Porter for serving a summons on M <sup>r</sup> Zacharey Smith		0	2 6
Paid for the summons		0	2 6
Aug 28. Spent in examening sum witnesses when going to make a Declaration against Smith		0	1 0
Sept 13 Gave to Councelar Jones for Drawing up the Declaration		1	1 0
20 Gave to Councelar Kendrick a retaining fee	„	10	6
27 Gave M <sup>r</sup> John Williams our Attorney a fee		0	3 6
Oct 1 P <sup>d</sup> for a hat bought from M <sup>r</sup> Smith		0	1 6
Oct 10 Gave Councellar Kendrick a fee for perusing the Declaration		0	10 6
Nov 25 P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> John Williams for an appearance against Zachary Smith		0	2 0

Feb 5	Spent by the Committee in consulting about employing an Attorney and other things	0 2 5
	at the same time paid M <sup>r</sup> Baxter an Attorney a fee	0 3 6
March 23	Spent when going [to] see whether the coroner might impanel a Jewrey	0 2 0
24	Spent in examining witnesses	0 2 5
	Spent on our Attorney after examining the Records in the Pent-house	0 0 6"
November 5th.	A Meeting was held at which:— "Every Brother [subscribed] five shillings for covering the seut against Zachariah Smith	6 5 0"
This covered the above costs, which amounted to £5 5s. 11d. Mr. Baxter, the Company's Attorney, then sent his bill of costs, dated March, 1735, details of which are given amounting to £34 15s. 4d. Mr. Baxter evidently had to wait some time for his money for we find:—		
"Feb 6. 1738.	P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Baxter the last of his fees	13 <sup>s</sup> 4 <sup>d</sup> "
Within a few months Smith was again caught selling felt hats, for we find:—		
"June 28. 1736.	Bought from Zachariah Smith by Lawance Griffith a hat cost	0 1 0
	Spent at the same time	0 0 4
29	Gave to M <sup>r</sup> Mayors Porter for going to Zach Smith by order of M <sup>r</sup> Mayor to order him to pack up his goods	0 0 6
July 12	Gave M <sup>r</sup> William Bridges, Silesiter, in y <sup>e</sup> Exchecker a fee	0 3 6
	Spent when inspecting in to our Books to give to the Bill in the Exchecker	0 1 6
22	Spent more on the above action	0 0 8

30	Spent more upon the Attorneys when the answer to the Bill was agreed upon	0	1	6
August 2	Gave to Councilor Kendrick for Drawing up the answer to the Bill	1	1	0
	Spent at the same time	0	2	9
Sept 17	Gave to Councilor Kendrick at the Rec <sup>t</sup> of the answer to the bill	1	1	0
24	Spent when searching in our Books to make answer to the Bill	0	1	8
25	Spent more when examining the Papers	0	0	8
27	Gave to Councilor Jones for his opinion on the Answer to Smiths Bill	1	1	0
	Spent at the same time		1	0
29	Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Walleys when sworn to answer Smiths Bill	0	8	7
Oct 27	Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Peter Wrenches when the rest of Brothers was sworn to the Bill	0	1	6
Nov 10	Paid to M <sup>r</sup> Lloyd the charges of the seut in the Mayor's Court	3	19	8
Jan 24	Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Walleys consulting about making the seut a way as required	0	2	3
Feb 4	P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Kendrick for Drawing the interogatores against Smith	1	1	0
Feb 8	P <sup>d</sup> Councilor Wilbraham a Retain- ing fee	1	1	0
	P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Wilbrahams clerk	0	2	6
	P <sup>d</sup> M <sup>r</sup> Wishaw of London for going to Retein M <sup>r</sup> Wilbraham for Letters and trouble	0	2	0
14	Spent at several times going to M <sup>r</sup> Partingtons about making a way the seut as he required	0	2	5
16	Spent more on the above action	0	3	7"

The Company succeeded in its action against Smith, but it was four years later before the Feltmakers got rid of him. We then find:—

“April 20 1740, Paid for pulling down Smiths tools and carrying them off .. .. . 0 2 8”

There is a note dated

“Nov 5, 1750. M<sup>r</sup> John Cawley has satisfied the whole Company on account of Zachariah Smiths suit.”

This, probably, was the longest and most expensive suit any of the City Companies entered into for the protection of their trade.

September 17th of the same year, 1736, Mr. Benjamin Ball was prosecuted

“for selling of hats at Glovers-stone and elsewhere and hath not served any Apprentiship to our Trade of feltmaking.”

January 10th, 1737, is an entry:—

“The charge a going to Ruthin for meat and Drinke and Horse hiar and a certificate when the Bill of inditement was found against Ball by the Grand Jury £2 os. 5d.”

Considerable interest appears to have been taken in this case by the hatters of other towns; for in the receipts we find:—

“March 14 Rec<sup>d</sup> from several M<sup>r</sup> Hatters at Wrexham Fair Towards prosecuting Benj<sup>n</sup> Ball.”

Donations towards the same were also received from Mr. Mason, Mr. Wallham, and Mr. Hurleston of Whitchurch; and a Mr. Blanter of Wem.

“August 8, 1758. It was then ordered and agreed upon by the consent of the whole Company of Skinners and Feltmakers that if any of the Breatheren of our Company shall have any Trade Concernes or Dealing whatsoever either by Buying or Selling or



Lending any of their Working Tools to Cotton Probert who is [a] man set up within the City of Chester and stands in opposition to our Company for every such offence shall pay to the Stewards of the Company in the name of a fine five pounds as witness our Hands

RALPH PROBERT	JOHN TOWSEY
EDWARD BURROWES	THO <sup>s</sup> JONES
FRANC <sup>s</sup> WALLEY	W <sup>m</sup> PEMBERTON
NATH <sup>l</sup> DEWSBURY	THO <sup>s</sup> TOWSEY
JOHN CAWLEY	CHA <sup>s</sup> PARRY."

January 2nd, 1764. The Stewards waited upon Cotton Probert

"to know whether he would come into the Company and his Answer was he believed he would let it alone."

#### RABBIT SKINS.

July 12th, 1708. It was ordered that:—

"Noe brother of this Company shall buy or sell any Rabbits except the Skinners of the said Company after the second day of february next ensuing upon paine and pennalty of five pounds for every default."

This order was strictly adhered to, for we find eleven years later:—

"Feb 10. 1719, Paide out upon y<sup>e</sup> Companys

Account concerning y<sup>e</sup> sute about tak-

ing up a person for selling Rabbits o 8 6"

At a Meeting held June 28th, 1784:—

"It was ordered that the following letter be sent to M<sup>r</sup> Grosvenor and M<sup>r</sup> Willbrham Boothe and that a copy of the same be sent to the Committee in London who are now endeavouring to get an Act passed to prevent the exportation of Rabbits and Hares Wooll.

‘Sir

At a Meeting of the Company of Skinners and Feltmakers in this City held this Day

It was unanimously resolved That as the exportation of Rabbits and Hares wooll is so very detrimental to the Hatting Trade of this Kingdom That a letter be wrote to our Members on behalf of our selves and the Trade in general begging they will give what assistance they can to a Petition depending in Parliament to prevent the exportation of the same. It was also resolved that some of the Committee for the said Petition be desired to wait on our members and Doubt not but those Gent<sup>n</sup> will explain the reasonableness and an necessity of the same in such a manner as will meet their approbation and engage their support.’”

“19 August 1784

At a Meeting held in the Common Hall it was agreed by the Company of Skinners & Feltmakers within this City to send the Committee in London the sum of three guineas to aid their endeavours in procuring an Act of Parliament to prevent the exportation of Coney Wool; & also to effect the alteration of the modes of Taping Hats as proposed by the Ministers. At the same time it was unanimously agreed that M<sup>r</sup> William Pemberton be excused bearing any part of the above expence.

The following Bro<sup>rs</sup> paid the sums severally set against their names.

M <sup>r</sup> Ald <sup>n</sup> Towsey	5 <sup>s</sup>	3 <sup>d</sup>
M <sup>r</sup> Ald <sup>n</sup> Dewsbury	5	3
M <sup>r</sup> Stew <sup>d</sup> Edwards	5	3
M <sup>r</sup> Stew <sup>d</sup> Gouldson	5	3
M <sup>r</sup> Jo <sup>s</sup> Towsey Jun <sup>r</sup>	5	3
M <sup>r</sup> Jo <sup>h</sup> Smith	5	3
M <sup>r</sup> Will <sup>m</sup> Posnett	5	3”

The Rules were very strict in regard to Journeymen and Apprentices:—

“Memorand: that the 5<sup>th</sup> of Eliz: 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. It is amongst other things enacted That noe p'son or p'sons that shall Depte out of Service shall be Retayned or accepted into any service w<sup>th</sup>out shewing a testimoniall or certificate from the head officer in the Corporacon where hee soe served upon the paine that every such pson soe dep[ar]tinge w<sup>th</sup>out a testimoniall or certificate to be imprisoned untill he p cure one & if he cannot p cure one w<sup>th</sup> in 21 dayes then to be whipped & used as a vagobond according to the lawe & that every pson Retayning such servant w<sup>th</sup> out shewing such testimoniall or certificate as is affores<sup>d</sup> shall forfeit for every such offence ffive pounds the one halfe now to the Commonwealth & the other moiety to the pson complaining.”

17th April, 1677:—

“It was ordered and agreed upon by the Consent of the whole Company y<sup>t</sup> if any Journyman y<sup>t</sup> have not served his time in the Cittie come to the Cittie and have worke hee shall pay at the time of his enterence into worke twelve pence and at the monthes end to pay or his M<sup>r</sup> for him to y<sup>e</sup> stewards for the use of sayd Company if he shall soe long continue at worke 4<sup>s</sup> [in all] 5<sup>s</sup> And it is further ordered and agreed upon by the Consent of the whole Company y<sup>t</sup> every stranger y<sup>t</sup> is a Journyman that hath a Certificate shall Deliv<sup>r</sup> the said Certificate unto the Stewards & itt be kept for the use of the Company & when the sayd Journyman shall require a certificate or any one y<sup>t</sup> is a stranger hee is to pay for the same unto the Stewards for the seale the sume of two shillings the wch is for the use of the Company and unto the Clarke for making it one shilling sixpence.”

April 5th, 1681:—

“It was agreed that any brother offending contrary to the above order should be fined Ten Shillings for each offence.

It is this day further ordered and agreed upon by the Consent of the whole Company y<sup>t</sup> every Journeyman that hath served his time in the cittie if hee require a certificate hee is to pay to the Clarke twelve pence and the seale freely given w<sup>th</sup> out paying.”

It was also:—

“Ordered by the Consent of our Company that if any Journeyman goe from his M<sup>r</sup> w<sup>th</sup> out his consent out of the Cittie at anytime heereafter if he come to the Cittie againe hee shall pay to the Stewards for the use of the Company viz—vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> before hee shall be admitted to work.”

“It is Ordered that not any strange Journeyman bee sett at worke at making of hats or trimming w<sup>th</sup> out our Aldermens & Stewards Consent, the Steward coming along w<sup>th</sup> the M<sup>r</sup> to y<sup>e</sup> Aldermen to aske Consent.”

“It is Ordered and agreed upon this p<sup>s</sup>ent Day and yeare being the 7<sup>th</sup> of february Anno 1620 that there shall not any brother of our Company at any time or times heare after sett any Stranger or any other p<sup>s</sup>on on Worke at the trade of ffeltmaking or trimming of hats or making of hat bands w<sup>th</sup> in the Cittie of Chester or w<sup>th</sup> in the liberties of the same Cittie w<sup>th</sup>out the Consent of the Aldermen and Stewards for there time being and all soe that noe brother of our Company shall not buy w<sup>th</sup> any such p<sup>s</sup>ones and every brother that Doth Contrary to this order shall pay for a fine for such Defaulte soe committed tenn shillings w<sup>th</sup>out any mittiga<sup>o</sup>n 10<sup>s</sup>”

It was also:—

“Ordered and agreed upon that if any brother doe procure or allure any Journeyman from his said M<sup>r</sup> service or yearely service in contempt of this said order he shall pay and forfitt for a fine to the Stewards for the Company’s use the sum of 40<sup>s</sup>”

“It is ordered and agreed upon by the brethren of our Company or the greatest parte of them that every yeare at Christmas each Journeyman w<sup>th</sup> shall happen at that time to bee a Journeyman belonging to any brother of our Company if hee at that time Doe give his M<sup>r</sup> a months warning then he shall be at libertie to Leave or stay w<sup>th</sup> his M<sup>r</sup> but if hee Doe not then leave his said M<sup>r</sup> hee is to stay the whole yeare w<sup>th</sup> him.”

This Order remained in force until 1708, when it was unanimously agreed, September 2nd of that year:—

“that every Journyman shall give his Master a months Warning either to work with him a month or to go out of town a month and after the expiration of the month to be at free liberty to work with any Master of y<sup>e</sup> Company.”

April 11, 1721. It was ordered:—

“that noe Brother of the saide Company shall sett any Jorniman on worke without lycence of the Aldermen and Stewardes.

It is further agreed upon as afore saide that if any Journiman doe come to this Citty to seeke worke That noe Brother shall sett the same Journiman on worke except that hee be firstly lised by the Aldermen and Stewards or by some of them and such Journeyman to bee placed with such one Brother as they saide Aldermen and Stewards shall thinke in theire wisdomes that hath most neede and that will pay there wages truely Every Brother that offendeth Contrary to this order shall pay unto the saide Company in the name of a fine 10<sup>s</sup>”

"It is Condescended and agreed that if a Journeyman Come to towne and have worke for one month that then hee shall pay to the occupation 12<sup>d</sup> to be free as a Journeyman and soe long as he worketh after to pay 1<sup>d</sup> a quarter and this money shall the master receive of the servant and pay to the occupation.

It is this day Ordered and agreed upon by the Consent of the whole Company That there shall not anie Brother of our Company here after suffer any Journiman or apprentice to make any felt for any friends whatsoever but only for the M<sup>r</sup> they dwell withall and for their Maisters use and not otherwise And what M<sup>r</sup> of this Companie Doth at any time hereafter suffer anie of his Journemen or apprentices to make any felt for anie one but only for his Maisters use then such Maisters to pay to the use of the Companie for a fine for every default the some of 10<sup>s</sup>."

March 31, 1730, a Rule was passed that no brother of the Company should himself, or through any one he employed, purchase any goods belonging to the Feltmakers' trade from any employee working for any other brother of the Company, without first giving notice to the employer of the person so offering the goods for sale; otherwise he was liable to a fine of five pounds for each offence.

Under a Rule dated November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1733, no master was allowed to engage a journeyman who had worked for any other brother without he first enquired from the previous master if he had fairly parted with him; if he had not, the journeyman had to return to his former employer. Anyone doing contrary was fined the sum of two guineas.

It was further ordered that no brother should ask or entice any journeyman, or cutter of stuff, nor get any other person to do so, under a penalty of two

guineas for each offence, and the dismissal of the workman.

It was at the same time ordered that no master should engage a journeyman who had not served his apprenticeship in the City, unless he, within six days, acquainted the Steward of the Company, who kept a book for the purpose, in which he entered the names of the journeyman and the master who employed him, and the date he was first set to work. The penalty for each offence was two shillings and sixpence.

Any Steward refusing, or neglecting, to enter the names in the book was dealt with by the Company.

The Stewards, or one of them, had to visit every brother's workshop within the City, during working hours, once a month, to see if any strange journey-men were employed, and enquire if any journeyman or apprentice were engaged on the premises contrary to the Company's order.

It was ordered that the Stewards should

“have for their gains every time Six pence.”

November 7, 1743. It was ordered and agreed by the Company

“That no Brother of our Company shall give any more than eight pence for Ruffing any hat whatsoever, and it is further agreed that every Brother that has men that can work in stuff shall give his man or men Hats to be Ruft on Fryday the 10th of this Instant November. Every Brother in pain of the forfeiture for every offence in such cause contrary to this order shall pay in the name of a foyne the sum of forty shillings

2<sup>li</sup> 0 0

RALPH PROBERT	}	Aldermen
JAM <sup>s</sup> WALLEY		
EDWARD BURROWES	}	Stewards
W <sup>m</sup> PEMBERTON		

Although these rules were so strict, they were continually broken both by masters and journeymen, and the fines, as entered in the books, must have added considerably to the funds of the Company. For the year 1735 there are at least fifty cases of masters or journeymen being fined in regard to employment contrary to the rules.

#### APPRENTICES.

February 7, 1620. An order was made for enrolling of apprentices' indentures:—

“It is Ordered and agreed upon by the consent of the Company that if any brother Doe take any Apprentice hee shall w<sup>th</sup> in a fortnight after or at the next meeting ensuing hee shall bring his Apprentice & his Indentures to bee viewed & seene by the whole Company then assembled and every brother y<sup>t</sup> shall offend Contrary to this order shall for every Day Contemning this order pay for a fine Twelve pence and shall bring w<sup>th</sup> him his apprentice & shall pay for the In rowling of his Indentures six pence and for not In rowling the said Indentures according to this Order hee is to pay in a fine as afore said  
12<sup>d</sup>.”

In *Harl. MS.*, 1996-600, is the

“Copy of an Order of Council, for apprehending all such Chester Feltmakers as did use the Trade, or keep any apprentice, without having served Seven Years Apprenticeship to that Trade themselves: dated 29 July, 1629.”

April 17, 1677. An order was made that the stewards are not to neglect to go through the company every month to see what apprentices are kept which are not “in rowled” in the books, and for every omission each steward is to be fined “Twelve pence.”



It was ordered at the same time:—

“That not any Master that hath two apprentices shall part with one or both of them to any brother of our Company w<sup>th</sup> out consent of our Aldermen & not to take any other Apprentice during the said Terme of his or theire in rowlment of Seven Yeares and hee that shall take any apprentice contrary to the forme of this Order shall stand to be a Warde of our Company.”

It was also ordered that no brother having an apprentice bound for any term above seven years,

“All though the said brother shall give his said apprentice the Terme that his Apprentice is bound for over & above seven years hee shall not bee admitted a brother During the terme of his apprenticeship bound by Indenture w<sup>th</sup> out the Consent of the Company.”

It was also ordered that no brother of the Company should, for the future, part with any of his apprentices to work with any other master for wages, or for hire, during the term of their apprenticeship, either party so offending to stand to the award of the Company.

It was also ordered that no member of the Company should allow, for the future, any apprentice to be bound to the trade of a haberdasher, but he

“Shall be p<sup>r</sup>cisely and expresly bound to the trade of feltmaking according to the Statute Lawes of this Realme upon paine of every pson soe offending contrary to this order shall be excluded & Debarred the Company and all the profitts w<sup>th</sup> hee or they soe offending might have reaped & received had they not offended Contrary to this our p<sup>r</sup>sent order.”

No master was allowed

“To take anyone to be an Apprentice the w<sup>th</sup> is a married man.”

This order was to protect the Company against men who, although not intending to follow the trade, or

serve a day to it, arranged with a master to go through the form of apprenticeship, so that they might obtain the Freedom of the City and Company.

December 3, 1681. It was ordered that for the future

“When any brother of the Company shall take any Apprentice to bee bound by indenture, that our clerke of our Company shall write and make them and within Twenty Dayes next after the said indentures bee sealed and Delivered that the said M<sup>r</sup> shall bring unto the Aldermen and Stewards his saide apprentice Indentures to bee in rowled in this our Booke of Orders and the saide clerke to be paid for writing the saide Indentures and for the in rowling of them according to the Anncient custome of the saide Company besides satisfaction unto the Clarke in that behalf as if hee had made the same Indentures the some of

5<sup>s</sup> 5<sup>d</sup>”

It was also ordered

“That noe Brother of our Company which hath or heereafter shall have any apprentice or apprentices shall att anie time or times hereafter pass away or suffer any of his Apprentices to be sett att worke with any Brother of our Company or in anie other house or place then in the house of the M<sup>r</sup> with whom any such apprentice is firstly bounden unto by Indenture without the Consent of the Aldermen and Stewards and the rest or greater parte of the Company And it is in like manner ordered that no Brother of our Company shall heerafter take anie Apprentice which M<sup>r</sup> hath not a house and workehouse and well and able to keepe him at work And that noe Brother of our Company shall have or keepe above two Apprentices at one time whoe soever doth contrary to this order shall forfeit and pay to our Stewards for

the use of our Company in the name of a fine the sume of five pounds Current English Money.”

“And it is further Ordered and agreed upon by consent of the whole Company That if any Brother of our Company whoe Doth either sell or pass away apprentice or apprentices by any wayes or meanes whatsoever or which hath any apprentice over Runne him shall not take any other apprentice untill the expiracon of the saide apprenticeship of such apprentice which shalbe eyther sould pased over or Runne away as aforesaid whosoever doth contrary to this order shall pay for the Company<sup>s</sup> use in y<sup>e</sup> name of a foyne 5 shillings.”

No Feltmaker was allowed to take more than one apprentice until he had been a member of the Company three years, and any Haberdasher had to be a member of the Company two years before he was allowed any apprentice, or he was liable to a fine of £2.

A note states—

“It was agreed by the whole company that this order above written shall be entirely crost out; August y<sup>e</sup> 8th 1749.”

April 9, 1714. It was ordered that any master having two apprentices should not take another until the elder apprentice had completed his apprenticeship, except it was one of his own sons. But he was allowed “to keep a boy under them as a Zinge; but not to worke at the making of hatts.”

April 11, 1721. It was unanimously agreed that every master should pay to the clerk the sum of two shillings and sixpence as a fee, whether he made out the indentures or not; and that “the clarke shall have two shillings six pence for making every paire of Indentures and noe more.”

It was also ordered that no brother should take an apprentice for a less term "than seven yeares at the least."

NO MASTER TO KEEP TWO SHOPS.

February 7, 1620. It was ordered that no brother of the Company

"Keepe or entertaine any stranger or foriner to keepe his shop or stall or to sell or utter anie wares for him"

under penalty of a fine, for each offence, the sum of three shillings and sixpence.

December 3, 1681. It was decided by

"A free voyce and consent of the brethren of our Company that for time to come here after there shall not any brother of our Company be admitted to keepe or pmitt to be kept any more than one shop or stall in one and the same place at one and the same time whether at hom or a broade"

under a penalty of £5 for each offence. The fine was, at a later period, reduced to £3 6s. 8d.

THE BRETHERN ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED A DEPARTED BROTHER TO HIS LAST RESTING PLACE.

"It is ordered and agreed upon by the whole consente of the same Company That when it shall please God at any time or times heare after to take unto his mercy out of this miserable and wretched world any of the same Brethren their wives or children that by lawfull warninge given by the stewards or by one of them they & every of them so warned at an houre appoynted doe attend the Aldermen and Stewards to accompany deade Corpes unto the church and not to departe them till the corpses bee committed to the earth which is a deede of love and charity and to doe in that case as other companyes do in the same city In paine to everyone that is absent at such tymes

w<sup>th</sup> out good occasion being before made knowne to the Aldermen and Stewards or to some of them and to crave pardon for their absence at such times in money 12<sup>d</sup>”

#### THE LIVERY.

The livery was similar in style and colour to that worn by the other City Companies.<sup>7</sup> The gowns were all trimmed with fur supplied by the Skinners and Feltmakers' Company. The livery had to be worn on various occasions; the brethren omitting to do so were fined. At a Meeting held April 13, 1689, it was ordered and agreed by the unanimous consent of the Company

“ That their shall not any brother of our Company come to any of our meetings or Assemblies w<sup>th</sup> out a Gowne in paine to every one that offendeth contrary to this our order to pay in name of a fine unto the Stewards for the use of the Company the sume of 1<sup>s</sup>”

When attending the funeral of any brother or sister, those of the brethren who had been in the Company three years had to wear their gowns. This rule also applied to the Meetings held on the fifth of November.

In the receipts for 1733 we find:—

“ May 31. Rec <sup>d</sup> from M <sup>r</sup> Richard Dewsbury	
for want of a gown a foyn	o 1 o
Ditto Rec <sup>d</sup> from Robert Welsh	o 1 o”

#### ELECTION DAY.

The election of Aldermen and Stewards of the Company originally took place on the first Thursday after Low-Sunday, when all arrears of payment due to the company had to be settled; any brother omitting to do so was fined five shillings.

<sup>7</sup> See “History of Barber Surgeons' Company,” by Frank Simpson.

In the minutes of a meeting held 1615, it is stated:—

“It is condescended and fully agreed upon by the said societie and Companye y<sup>t</sup> their Election Day for the choosing of y<sup>e</sup> officers of the same Company shalbe for Ever upon the Thursdaye next following Dinica in Albis otherwise called Low Sonnday and their all ye same Brethren to meete at their place of Meeting and then and their by the more voyces of y<sup>e</sup> saide Brethren to make choice of those Aldermen and Stewards according to Auncient Custome as hath bine used heretofore in the same Cittie of Chester.”

December 3, 1681. It was decided that, for the future, the Election Day should be held upon “the Tuesday in Easter week.”

May 5, 1863. It was resolved:—

“That the members of this Company shall meet on the Whit Monday in every year at 8 o'clock in the evening.”

The Election Day of 1815 must have been a sad one for the members present, for the Minute of the Meeting reads:—

“April 21. This Day being our Election day at M<sup>rs</sup> Trevor's, the Boot, it was unanimously agreed that the Old Aldermen should continue for the year ensuing the Rest of the Members being Dead

JOHN EDWARDS	} Aldermen
RICHARD DEWSBURY	
RICHARD DEAN	} Stewards”
JOSEPH AINSWORTH	

The Annual Dinner took place on these Election Days. The Skinners and Feltmakers do not appear to have gone in for such elaborate functions as the Barber-Surgeons, and the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Companies, but they were certainly connoisseurs in the question of drink. Instead of that beverage

“strong beer,” to which the Smiths seemed so partial, the Skinners, etc., preferred punch and brandy. The former is first included in 1736, but from 1772 it is regularly mentioned. Porter<sup>8</sup> is mentioned for the first time in 1777. In 1736 we find a Sedan chair mentioned for the first time. This was owing to the indisposition of Alderman Parry. A similar case happened in 1765. The Skinners, etc., do not appear to have been so musical as some of the other Companies; on no occasion do we find the engagement of musicians for the dinners, neither do we find any entry relating to the engagement of the City Waits.

“ 1720 April 20 <sup>th</sup> Paide for a Rump of Beefe			
and a side of Lambe		00	08 09
Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Pooles house		01	00 00
1721 April 11, Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Pickervins for ale		00	08 09
Paide for Meate		00	12 09
,, for Breade & Dressing		00	10 00
1723 April 7 Paide to M <sup>r</sup> Poole for beef,			
Mutton bread and sallott		00	12 02
To M <sup>r</sup> Poole for dressing		00	05 00
To M <sup>r</sup> Poole for Drink & tobacco		00	16 06
1729 April 8 Paide M <sup>r</sup> Smith for y <sup>e</sup> Com-			
pany's Dinner being 24		01	04 00
Paide y <sup>e</sup> same time for Ale and tobacco		01	01 02
1735 P <sup>d</sup> for 21 at Dinar at M <sup>r</sup> James Walley	1	1	0
Gave the Cook	0	1	6
P <sup>d</sup> for Punch Ale and Tobacco	2	0	6
1736 P <sup>d</sup> for the Election Dinner at M <sup>r</sup>			
Walleys	1	4	0
Gave the Cook	0	1	6
P <sup>d</sup> for Ale Punch and tobacco	1	16	6

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Ashe says that this malt liquor obtained its appellation on account of its having been drunk by porters in the City of London about 1730.

Paid for a chair for M <sup>r</sup> Ald Parry being indisposed	. 2 0
1765 April 9 Dinner at the Pyd Bull	. 9 0
For Ale &c	1 0 0
To the Servants	. 2 6
To a Sedan for M <sup>r</sup> Cawley	. 1 0
1777. Paid for Dinner at the Black Dog	0 16 6
Wine and Punch	0 9 0
Porter Ale & tobacco	0 6 2
Gave to the servants	0 2 6"

And so these entries go on from year to year.

#### OLD INNS.

Many of the old Inns at which these dinners took place have been pulled down, or the Licenses have been confiscated, and the names by which they were known forgotten, such as:—The Pied Dog, 1727; The Green Dragon, Eastgate Street, 1728; The Horse and Baggs, 1732; The Phoenix, Bridge Street, 1795; The White Talbot, Eastgate Street, 1745; The Golden Talbot, Newgate Street, 1748; Liverpool and Shropshire House, Northgate Street, 1845; Blossoms Inn, Foregate Street, 1756; The Star, Watergate Street, 1760; The Legs of Man, Northgate Street, 1770; The Black Dog, Bridge Street Row, E., 1777; The Boot, Northgate Street, 1798; The Pointer Dog, Watergate Street, 1839.

#### THE MIDSUMMER SHOW.

This Company took part in the Midsummer Show.

“It is Ordered and agreed upon by the Company that all our brethren shall by lawfull warning geuen unto them by the Stewards at a place appoynted attend upon the Aldermen on Midsummer eve Each man in his place in Comely and Decent order to accompany there said Aldermen and Stewards w<sup>th</sup> there boy & Scoscian of Armes on horse back to



the bars at the usuall place where the said Shew is yearely sett except they haue beane giuen them to the contrary by the Aldermen in paine to forfit euery man that offendeth being a brother of our Company Contrary to this order to pay to the Stewards for the Company use the sum of — 3 6"

The Skinners, Cardmakers, Hatters, Paynters, and Girdlers performed "The Resurrection." This play took place on the third day, Wednesday, in Whitsun Week. In the books no details of expenses in connection with the show are given. This leads one to suppose that the joint companies named hired the stage belonging to one of the other companies.

The Skinners regularly supplied the furs to the various companies for trimming their garments. In the Smiths' accounts for the Whitsun plays we find:—

" 1554. Paid to the Skinners ij<sup>s</sup>."

There are also similar entries for 1567 and 1569.

#### THE HORSE RACES.

The Company each year subscribed towards the races.

February 19, 1713, the Mayor and Corporation invited each of the City Companies to subscribe ten shillings

"Towards a piece of plate to be run for on the Roodee on S<sup>t</sup> George's Day yearly for ever unless the same happen to bee Saturday or Sunday and then on the Monday following as M<sup>r</sup> Mayor and the Justices of the Pease or any five of them whereof the Mayor to be one shall think reasonable not being lesse than they have usually contributed for the greatest part of twenty years last past . . ."

And that the various Companies should

"Putt the Co<sup>m</sup>on Seal of the said Company or such Seal as they shall think fit to bee used as the Co<sup>m</sup>on Seal of the said Company to such Instrument . . ."

And that the agreement should be binding on the Aldermen and Stewards of the various Companies

“And their successors for ever to contribute the said yearly sum of Tenn Shillings towards the said plate to be runn for on the Roodee yearly for ever as aforesaid the Mayor and Citizens of the said City contributing the said yearly sum of Tenn pounds thereunto aforesaid.”

The Skinners and Feltmakers' Company held a meeting April 13, 1714, to consider the recommendation of the Mayor and Corporation, and decided that the Company should agree with the suggestion, and for the future subscribe under the seal of the Company the sum of ten shillings annually. This the Company continued to do (with the exception of one year when it subscribed 20/-) until the year 1797. In the books it is sometimes called St. George's Plate, and at others the City Plate.

According to an Order of Assembly, 1693, it was ordered “that no horses are to run for St. George's race, unless they come in eight days before the races, and continue in the City.”

#### CIVIC FUNCTIONS.

The City Gilds took part in all civic functions, and accompanied the Mayor to Church.

“Dec. 13, 1681. It was ordered and Agreed upon by the Consent of our Company that what Brother of Company which hath been a brother of our Company 3 years when he is warned to attend M<sup>r</sup> Mayor upon any publick occasion, shall come with a Gowne or else pay in the name of a foyne 6 pence.”

In 1690, the Drapers' Company was fined £10 for not attending the Mayor on Shrove Tuesday.

There are several entries in the Company's accounts of plate being presented to the Sheriff, but so far as this

Company is concerned the recipients have always been members of the Company.

" Feb 24 1719 P<sup>d</sup> Mr Will<sup>m</sup> Bridges his fee  
for engraving y<sup>e</sup> plate for Sherife Bridge oo 02 06"

Thomas Bridge was one of the City Sheriffs and Alderman of the Company this year.

Many members of this Company have had the honour of occupying the position of Mayor or Sheriff of the City.

1455	W. Hankey	Skinner	Sheriff
1516	Randal Done	"	"
1529	Ralph Goodman	"	"
1576	John Hervey	"	Mayor
1576	Tho <sup>s</sup> . Lineall	Hatter	Sheriff
1591	" "	"	Mayor
1595	Phil Phillips	"	Sheriff
1597	William Thropp	"	"
1597	Robert Fletcher	"	"
1600	Thomas Wright	"	"
1606	Phil Phillips	"	Mayor
1611	Robert Fletcher	"	Sheriff
1675	Richard Wright	"	Mayor
1719	Thomas Bridge	"	Sheriff
1723	Peter Parry	"	"
1737	Ralph Probert	"	"
1746	Thomas Bridge	"	"
1747	Edward Walley	"	"
1749	Charles Parry	"	"
1751	Ralph Probert	"	Mayor
1752	Edward Burrows	"	Sheriff
1764	" "	"	Mayor
1764	Francis Walley	"	Sheriff
1767	Robert Williams	Skinner	"
1774	William Corles	"	"
1783	Cotton Probert	Hatter	"
1787	Math: Dewsbury	"	"
1805	Jn <sup>o</sup> Swar. Rogers	Skinner	"

## THE CURFEW BELL.

The Company paid annually a sum of two shillings and six pence for ringing the curfew bell.

When writing the history of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, and, later, that of the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company, I was under the impression that the sums of money, which varied in amount, were subscriptions towards the cost of ringing the Curfew, nightly, but after perusing the Skinners and Felt-makers' books, I am inclined to believe that the payments were made to the sexton for ringing the bell on the night of the annual dinner and election of aldermen and stewards of the various companies. In the Barber-Surgeons' books, and those of the Smiths', etc., Company, the item was always entered as "Paid to the bell," the latter having various appellations, but was generally called the curfew, or nine o'clock bell.

In the Skinners and Feltmakers' books we find:—

" March 30, 1714.	Paid to the Bobell Ringers	0	2	6
April 1 1719,	Paid for y <sup>e</sup> Bow Bell	0	2	6
April 25 1745,	Gave to the Sexton of S <sup>t</sup>			
	Warbours for ringing the Bow Bell	0	2	6
April 12 1748	Paid for 9 o clk Bell	0	2	6
April 17 1750	„ To the Bon Bell	0	2	6"

Some years it is called the Big Bell. This annual payment continued until 1765, a year when most of the Companies ceased payment for ringing the bell.

## WALKING THE BOUNDARIES.

This Company regularly paraded the boundaries of the City:—

" Sept 18, 1715	Paid for four horses riding			
	the bounds of the City	7	0	
	Spent the same day	6	8	
Feb 26 1723	P <sup>d</sup> at Riding y <sup>e</sup> Citty bounds			
	and horses	7	0	
	Spent same day	10	0"	

And so these entries continue year after year.

## THE RIVER DEE.

The City Companies were ordered to raise certain sums of money towards the completion of a new Quay or Haven near the mouth of the river. Navigation had become greatly impeded by the shifting sands, and the port proper was gradually removed from the City nearer the mouth of the river. The silting of sand which destroyed the wharfages of Old Quay and Parkgate was subject for legislation so far back as 1499. Eventually Dawpool, which is just below Caldy on the verge of the river, became the port and the rendezvous for the embarkation of the troops of Cheshire and Lancashire. Navigation had become so bad, through the continual silting up of the river, that an order was made dated 3rd March, 1541[2], addressed to Mr. Hennage, Master of the King's Majesties Woods beyond Trent, within the survey of the Augmentation Court, directing him:—

“To deliver to the Mayor of Chester [Hugh Aldersey] or his deputy 200 trees growinge in his highness woods in flintshire and Cheshire . . . towards the amēndment [completion] of the new haven at Lightfote pole [pool].”<sup>9</sup>

The letter is signed:—

“EDWARD NORTHE  
THOMAS MAYLE  
W WILDEMARY”

Henry VIII., having conferred a sum of £40 on the newly-erected College at Chester, diverted this gift to the construction of this new haven. In 1547, the Lords of Council, in reply to a petition for aid in carrying out the projected work, announce that they have advised King Edward in favour of it.

<sup>9</sup> See *Great Letter Book*, Vol. I., p. 1, in the City Muniment Room.

A further appeal was made 19th July, 1551, to the Lord Treasurer by the Magistrates of Chester, praying for intercession with the King for a sum of money in aid of the new haven. Among the City Records in the Corporate Muniment Room, Chester, is a book entitled "The Book of Benevolence or Voluntary Contributions made in 1559 towards the making of the New Haven." They are called voluntary contributions, but there are records of some people being imprisoned for not paying. The Quay still lacked sufficient progress for want of money to continue the work, so that the following year, 1560, a collection was made on the Sunday after All Saints' Day, in all the Churches throughout the kingdom, to raise a fund to build this Quay, and a further assessment was levied in Chester for that purpose.

In 1568 an order was passed that a further levy should be made on every inhabitant, and that the Stewards of the several occupations should raise certain stipulated sums of money from their Companies, or Gilds. The Skinners and Haberdashers' Company had to pay 7/3 quarterly.

The appeals continued until 1608, when, after lingering on for sixty years, and the Quay approaching completion, through want of funds it had to be abandoned, and at a later date was partly demolished, and eventually sold, in 1799, to Sir Roger Mostyn.

#### OWEN JONES' BEQUEST.

That the Chester City Gilds still exist is probably owing to the fact that Owen Jones, a butcher, bequeathed a small estate at Minera to the poor of the various City Companies.<sup>10</sup> In 1757, the various

<sup>10</sup> For copy of Will see "Barber Surgeons' Company," p. 46, by F. Simpson.

Companies held Meetings to consider a recommendation to let the land at Minera to a Company for mining purposes:—

“We the Aldermen & Stewards of the Company of Skinners and Feltmakers whose names are here underwritten do this third day of June 1757 Concent and agree that the Aldermen and Stewards of our said Company shall and may as such and on the behalf of our said Company sign Seal and execute with their own respective names and seals an Indenture of Lease for the Term of 31 years of Lands in Minera in the County of Denbigh given to the use of the several Companys in this City by the Will of Owen Jones deceased with their Appurtes unto Tho<sup>s</sup> Slaughter Esq, Doctor Philip Fernihaugh & M<sup>r</sup> Richard Richardson with Liberty to sink for and get lead Ore and other Minerals therein in such manner under such yearly Rent and Covenants as is and are particularly mentioned in the said Intended Lease lately read and produced to us and which is intended to bear date and commence from the 7 Day of this Instant June. We do hereby likewise authorize the Common seal of our said Company to be affixed to a Parchment writing bearing equal Date herewith thereby Justifying the Concent of our said Company to the said Lease.

RALPH PROBERT

JN<sup>o</sup> CAWLEY

EDW. BURROWES

CHA<sup>s</sup> PARRY

FRAN<sup>s</sup> WALLEY

NATH<sup>l</sup> DEWSBURY”

“Nov 7, 1781

We the Aldermen and Brethren of our Company Do hereby acknowledge to have received of Mr John Towsey and Mr Thomas Edwards Stewards of our said Company the sum of Thirty one pounds Six Shillings & Seven pence in full for our share of four hundred and seven pounds Ten Shillings raised by

them for use of our Company for the Rent of the Lands in Minera bequeathed by the late Owen Jones to the several Companys of this City and also the Intrest of the Farm of the Lead mines raised out of the said Lands which said Money was due to our Company at Midsummer last

EDWARD BURROWS

THO<sup>s</sup> JONES”

[And nine other members].

There is no account as to what was done with the money.

At a meeting held the 22nd day of July, 1782,

“It was ordered that the Aldermen and Stewards of this Company do by writing under their Hands and by affixing the Seal of this Company thereto, join and concur with the Aldermen, Stewards, Masters, and Wardens of the several other companies within this City, in giving full authority and Power, on the part of our Company, and conjointly with the said other Companies, to Mr Thomas Brock, the Town Clerk of this City, to deliver to the now Mayor and Sheriffs of the said City, on their Receipts for the same, in Trust for the said several Companies, the Several Mortgages and Securities (with the Deeds and Writings attending the same) which have been taken to, and in the names of the late successive Mayors and Sheriffs of the said City in Trust for the said several Companies, for securing several principal Sums of Money amounting together to the principal Sum of 10260<sup>l</sup> 6<sup>s</sup>. which hath arose from the farm of the Mines in the Lands heretofore of Owen Jones deceased

EDWARD BURROWES } Ald  
 THO<sup>s</sup> JONES }  
 WILL HOBROW  
 THO<sup>s</sup> TOWSEY  
 NATH<sup>l</sup> DEWESBURY

THO<sup>s</sup> EDWARDS } St<sup>w</sup>  
 JN<sup>o</sup> TOWSEY }  
 JONAS GOULDSON  
 JOSEPH SMITH  
 WILL<sup>m</sup> PERMBERTON”



April 20, 1786, a copy of Owen Jones' Will was purchased, and the following year another copy of the Will, principally relating to Northop, was procured. Some dispute as to the investment of the money appears to have arisen, and the following letter was written to the Mayor, etc. :—

“To the Right Worshipfull Tho<sup>s</sup> Edwards Esq.  
Mayor M<sup>r</sup> Cha<sup>s</sup> Panton and M<sup>r</sup> Edmond Bushell  
Sheriffs, Trustees of the late Owen Jones Will.  
Gent<sup>l</sup>”

The inclosed memorial was read and approved of at a meeting of the Aldermen Stewards & Company of Feltnakers & Skinners held on the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of Feb. 1787 & ordered to be presented to you And we beg leave further to observe that if you or your successors have a claim to have any right or Authority as Trustees under the said Will to dispose of & Distribute the yearly Rent of the Minera Estate late Owen Jones's & also the £12 p<sup>r</sup> year payable by the Treasurer of this City out of the Tols of the Bridge Gate outwards<sup>11</sup> as to you or they shall seem meet to the severall Companys to whom you or they may be in Trust for It is our opinion that neither you nor they can be justified nor have any authority to Dispose of the Interests of the accumulated sum of £10260 - 6 - 0 which hath arisen from the Farm of the mines in the Land of the late Owen Jones otherwise than as is mentioned in the afforesaid Memorial To exemplify this no Lease nor Leases could have been granted nor could £2000 have been taken out of the Companys Fund to be subscribed toward making a Navigable Canal nor could the Bonds Mortgages Securities &° for the sum of £10,260 - 6<sup>s</sup> have been taken out of the Hands of M<sup>r</sup> Brock (late Town Clark) without the Consent of the whole

<sup>11</sup> The Dee Bridge tolls were abolished Thursday, January 1st, 1885.

Companies. It was at the same time ordered that this be signed by each member of our Company that were in the City at that time.

And also that this our order be entered in our Company's Book.

The Lands in Minera, bequeathed to the several companies of this City, by the late Owen Jones, by his Will dated February 14, 1658, contain nearly fifty-eight statute acres in the following holdings:—

	A.	R.	P.
Thomas Roberts	14	0	16
John Rogers	3	2	11
Elizabeth Williams	0	3	9
John Williams	35	1	4
Anthony Oldfield	4	0	25
	<hr/>		
	57	3	25
	£	s.	d.
Rent of the Lands	17	0	0
The Interest of the accumulated sum of £10,260 6 <sup>s</sup> . at four per cent	410	8	0
The Interest of £200 secured on the Toll of the Bridge Gate outwards	12	0	0
	<hr/>		
	439	8	0
Paid to the Mayor and Sheriffs as per Will <sup>12</sup>	5	0	0
Paid to the Companies yearly	407	10	0
To Balance unaccounted for to the Com- panies	26	18	0
	<hr/>		
	439	8	0

N.B. The Interest of £250 from Sir  
Thomas Stanley £15 per year, lost"

The following letter was also sent to the Mayor and Sheriffs:—

<sup>12</sup> This was for their rings. See "History of Barber Surgeons' Company," p. 53, by F. Simpson.

“The United Companies of the City of Chester desire to present (by their respective Delegates) the following Requisition to the Right Worshipful John Halwood Esq Mayor, M<sup>r</sup> Nathaniel Dewsbury, and M<sup>r</sup> William Edwards Sheriffs. Hoping they will with all convenient speed dispose of it (money which has arisen from the Estate of Owen Jones) in the public Funds. Our reason for this Request must be obvious for tho’ the present Securities should be eligible beyond the Shadow of Doubt, yet they are subject to, and must undergo, continued Alterations which may, and we think must, be attended with continual Losses. We need only appeal to similar Cases in your own Office, to Justify our apprehension.”

There are instances entered in the books of members who, having received their share of the interest accruing from Owen Jones’ bequest, ceased to pay their usual subscription to the Company, such as:—

“18 April 1786.

It is this day ordered that whereas we the Aldermen Stewards & Brethren of our Worshipfull Company of Skinners & Feltmakers are at an Annual expence on sundry occasions to support & maintain the Dignity of our said Company as also by attending the Mayor & Corporation of this City upon several occasions. And as M<sup>r</sup> Ald<sup>n</sup> Edward Burrows, Ald<sup>n</sup> of this City, M<sup>r</sup> Tho<sup>s</sup> Jones later Ald<sup>n</sup> of our Company M<sup>r</sup> Jonathon Gouldson & M<sup>r</sup> Jo<sup>s</sup> Pemberton who have each of them received a few years ago upwards of Thirty pounds apiece from our Company & have in a most shameful manner deserted & left our said Company (which by their Oath they are bound to maintain) being all and each of them in arrears to our said Company & able to pay the same which if they had not woud have been excused but obstinately refuse to pay their dues to the said Company. There-

fore it is this day unanimously agreed that they the said Aldm<sup>n</sup> Burrows, Tho<sup>s</sup> Jones, Jn<sup>o</sup> Gouldson & M<sup>r</sup> Joseph Pemberton be excluded & Deprived & is hereby expeled & Deprived from receiving all & every part or parts of any benefit or emolument whatsoever which may arise & become due to the Brethren of our said Company on any account whatsoever from and after this day."

On June 25, 1866, the Aldermen and Stewards of thirteen Companies attended before the Trustees, complaining that the Hosiers' Company had lately admitted several persons into their Company who were not entitled to the freedom of the City, nor that of the Company, exhibiting their books to shew that such a custom was against their rules, when it was resolved to call upon the Stewards of the offending Company to shew cause why they had so acted. On the 9th July following, the officers of the said Company attended before the Trustees, and represented that it was their custom, founded upon a written rule, to admit into the Company freemen of the City upon payment of a fine; upon which, it was resolved to submit a Case for the opinion of the Charity Commissioners, who sent the following reply, which was ordered to be printed and circulated amongst the several Companies; a copy of which is attached to the fly-leaf of Volume II. of the Skinners and Feltmakers' books.

#### CHARITY COMMISSION.

"In the matter of Owen Jones' Charity, in the City of Chester.

"The Board of Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, having considered a statement and application submitted to them by the Trustees of the above-mentioned charity, dated the 10th day of July, 1866, requesting the advice and direction of the said Board

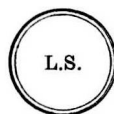
upon the question hereinafter mentioned, relating to the administration of the said charity, do hereby advise the said Trustees that, according to the proper construction of the Will of Owen Jones, the founder of the said charity, dated the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1658, (as such Will is stated and set forth in the aforesaid application)—

1<sup>st</sup>—No person is entitled to be a recipient of the Charity who shall not have the double qualification of being a member of one of the Companies of the City of Chester, existing at the date of the founder's Will, and of being also a freeman of the same city.

2<sup>nd</sup>—The register, or list of the members for the time being, of any of the said Companies, duly authenticated by the proper officer of such Company, may be accepted by the Trustees, without further enquiry, as sufficient evidence that the persons named in such register or list are members of the same Company.

Sealed by order of the Board, this eighteenth day of August 1866.

HENRY M. VANE  
Secretary "



#### THE CHESTER AND NANTWICH CANAL.

An Act for making this canal passed the House of Lords Tuesday, March 10, 1772.<sup>13</sup>

The Skinners and Feltmakers, like most of the other Companies, at a meeting held April 27, 1772, agreed to the investment of £2,000 towards making a navigable canal between Chester and the towns of Middlewich and Nantwich. When the news was received in Chester that the Canal Bill had passed the House of Lords, there was much rejoicing. The City Gilds paraded with their banners. The Skinners and Feltmakers'

<sup>13</sup> The date given in the "History of the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company," unfortunately got printed as March 16th.

Company purchased a cockade, at a cost of one shilling and six pence, for the banner bearer's hat, and he was paid one shilling for carrying the banner.

A very interesting account of the procession is given in the *Chester Courant*, Tuesday, March 17, 1772:—

“Thursday morning last as soon as the post brought an account of the Chester Canal Bill having passed the House of Lords, the bells in all the churches in the City rang, and in the evening illuminations were elegant and universal. Next day the proprietors of the canal with a number of gentlemen and the principal persons in trade, some in carriages and others on horseback went, in the afternoon to the Glass House [now, 1914, called ‘The Limes,’ Christleton Road,] about a mile from the City, to meet Messrs Chamberlain and Griffith on their return from Soliciting the bill they were escorted amidst joyful acclamations of some thousands of the inhabitants to the Exchange, where a proper entertainment was prepared for the reception of them, and such gentlemen as pleased to honour it. The room was handsomely illuminated, a large bonfire lighted in the Green Market Place, opposite to it, and every respectful compliment that could be thought of, was paid to them the fin . . . . and highest marks of the public approbation of their conduct. In the procession was a boat, fixed upon a carriage (the wheels of a post chaise) and drawn by horses. It was properly decorated with Jack ensign and pendants and with banners on which the arms of Mr Crewe of Crewe, were painted, the favours, universally worn on the occasion were light blue, scarlet and white, or silver, correspondent to the colours of his livery. A Post chaise and his horses were provided to receive Messrs. Chamberlaine and Griffiths, from the carriage in which they had travelled. And

the whole appearance of the calvacade, unlike the noisy procession of a party, exceeded everything of its kind remembered in the City."

THE COMPANY'S BANNERS, OR COLOURS.

The Colours of the various Gilds, or Companies, were conspicuous on all festive occasions. They were always carried when war or peace was proclaimed. They were also in evidence on the 29th of May, and the 5th of November. On these occasions we regularly find in the disbursements:—

"Paid for carrying the colours o 1 o"

August 4, 1715, two shillings and sixpence was paid for the hire of

"Two horses to ride through the City att the proclamation of King George and carrying the Colours."

May 7, 1718, two shillings and threepence was paid

"For a new hat for y<sup>e</sup> Cullors [and] 6<sup>s</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> for trimming it."

This hat, although said to be for the Colours, was evidently intended for the use of the person carrying the Colour. In 1722, the Colour was repaired at a cost of two shillings and sixpence. The old Colour having become worn out, it was unanimously agreed, at a Meeting held in the Common-hall, April 7, 1724:—

"That new cullors shall be made and provided for the use of the Company against the 29<sup>th</sup> Day of May next."

It appears doubtful, however, if the Company did have its new banner by the date named, as in the accounts we find:—

"April 27. Spent by y<sup>e</sup> order of y<sup>e</sup> Aldermen  
with M<sup>r</sup> Basano about y<sup>e</sup> Colours o 0 03 00  
June 5. Paide M<sup>r</sup> Parker y<sup>e</sup> Mercer for  
3 yards of Italian silk for new Colours 01 01 00  
Sept. 1. Paid for new fringe for y<sup>e</sup> Colours 00 08 03  
Paide for canvas for y<sup>e</sup> head of y<sup>e</sup> Colours 00 00 06

October 13. Paid M <sup>r</sup> Basano <sup>14</sup> for painting of y <sup>e</sup> Colours	04 10 00
Paide for carrying y <sup>e</sup> Colours	00 00 06
November 5. Paide for Lace Button and loop	00 01 08''

This banner, of a dark green colour, is oblong in form. It is one and a half yards in length, thirty-eight and a half inches in width, tapering down to twenty-four and a half inches at the end. It is surrounded on three sides by gold fringe one and a half inches in depth. It contains on the one side the arms of the Skinners, their motto, and the names of the Aldermen and Stewards.

JOHN DEWSBURY	} A
THOMAS BRIDGE	
RICHARD DEWSBURY	} S.
THO: STRINGER	

and on the other side of this banner are the arms and crest of the Feltmakers, with their motto, and the date, 1724.

In the disbursements for 1735 we find:—

“ May 23, For a new hat for the Cullors	0 5 0
For a Lace button and Loop	0 6 6''

And in the receipts:—

“ Rec <sup>d</sup> for ould gold lace of the ould hat	0 1 0''
“ 1742. Nov: Paide for Hooping the pole that carries the Collers	0 0 4
1772 March. Paide to a Cockade	0 1 6
Paide To carrying the Colours when the Canal Bill came down	0 1 0
May 4. To carrying the Colours to wait on Mr Mayor at cutting the first sod of the Canal	0 1 0
1776, May 29, To a Colour Pole	0 2 2''

<sup>14</sup> For a short sketch of the life of Mr. Bassano, see “History of the Barber Surgeons' Company,” 1911, by Frank Simpson.



At the annual meeting of the Company, held June 10, 1889:—

“It was unanimously agreed upon to present the old Flag to the Chester Museum Committee of Management.”

The colour was handed over to the Museum authorities by the Steward, Mr. Edward Myddleton, Mold Junction, June 11, 1889, the receipt for which is attached in the Company's book.

It is interesting to know that this colour was the first of the City Companies old banners to be presented to the Museum for its archæological collection, since which time seven others have been given, all of which are exhibited in the Archæological Room. These historical relics are protected between glass, which will enable future generations to see some of the old emblems carried by their forefathers, the Freemen of Chester.

At a meeting held November 7, 1781, the stewards paid over to the aldermen and members of the Company £31 6s. 7d., being that Company's share of the rents received from the lands in Minera. As previously stated, no mention is made in the books as to what was done with that money, but there is an entry:—

“Nov 7. 1781

At a Meeting held this Day there was left in the Stewards hands to bye a pair of Coulers 7 0 6”

It seems probable, therefore, that the balance was divided among the members.

In the disbursements for 1781-2, we find:—

“To three yards and halfe of Blue Lute-string <sup>15</sup> for the new colours	1 2 9
7 yards of Blue fringe for do	1 11 6
To Henry Taylor for painting	5 5 0
	<u>£7 19 3”</u>

<sup>15</sup> A corruption of Lustring, meaning a piece of glossy silk fabric. Murray's *English Dictionary*.

In addition to the £7 os. 6d. left in the hands of the stewards for the purchase of a colour, a call was made upon the members to make up the deficiency, thirteen brothers paying one shilling and sixpence each.

“Nov. 5, 1782. A new hat was bought for y<sup>e</sup> colours at a cost of \*7/- and a gold button and loop \*1/6<sup>d</sup>. Sewing y<sup>e</sup> fringe on and making the Colours and New Canvas 5\*/-”

At a meeting held April 18, 1786, it was decided that the names of the two aldermen,

“Edward Burrows and Thomas Jones be dashed out of the new colours that the names of two so unworthy Brothers might be had no more in remembrance.”

May 1, 1792. Four shillings and six pence was paid for painting the names of the new aldermen on the colour.

This banner was carried when the Company proclaimed the accession of William IV. (1830). It has since disappeared, and nothing is known of it at the present time.

#### THE ARMS OF THE COMPANY.

The Arms of the Skinners are :—

Ermine, on a chief Gules, three Crowns Or, with caps of the first: Supporters, An heraldic tiger sinister, and a Wolf dexter, both proper. Crest, a leopard, proper.

And, below, the motto :—

“To God only be all glory.”

The Arms of the Feltmakers are :—

Barry nebulee of six, Argent and Azure, on a bend gules a lion passant gardent Or. Supporters. Two Indian Goats argent attired and unguled Or.

Inscribed on a scroll is the Company's motto :—

“Serve and obey.”



Arms of the Skinners



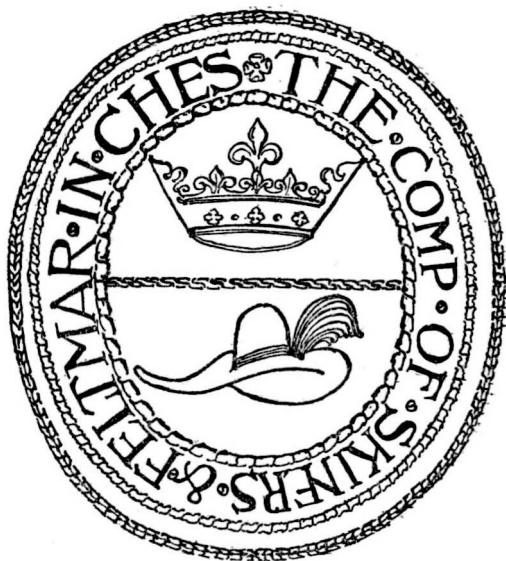
Arms of the Feltmakers



## THE SEAL.

The seal of the Company bears its crest.

It measures one and a quarter inches by one and one-eighth inches. Around the seal is the title of the Company, much abbreviated.



*H. F. Davies, A.R.I.B.A., del.*

In the centre—A cavalier's hat in the lower part, and in the upper a crown. The seal is of silver, attached to a rosewood handle by a silver band, on which is engraved:—

“The Gift of + Richard Wright  
Edward Wilding  
+ 1655.”

## EXTRACTS FROM ACCOUNTS.

“ 1717	Aug 3	Spent at attending the Duke of Bolton	00 05 02
1718	Aprill 14	Paid for a Letter from Bridgnorth	00 01 00
„	16	Paid y <sup>e</sup> Clarks Sallary	00 06 08

	May 7	Spent about sending a Colt out of towne	00 02 06
1720	Feb 24	Paide to Esq <sup>r</sup> Kendrick his fee	00 10 00
		„ to Will <sup>m</sup> Bridges his fee	00 03 06
1721	Aug 23	Spent at M <sup>r</sup> Pooles waiting for the Duke of Grafton	00 09 00
1726	April 16	Paid for a string for the green bag	00 00 06
1727	Nov 5	Paid M <sup>r</sup> Dawes at y <sup>e</sup> Pyed Dog	0 0 6
	„ 10	„ M <sup>r</sup> Venables when y <sup>e</sup> Lord Lift <sup>t</sup> of Ireland was to come in	0 8 0
1728	June 11	P <sup>d</sup> at M <sup>r</sup> Meales of the Green Dragon upon K. Georges Proclamation for Ale & tobacco	0 9 6
1734		Spent at a Companys Meeting for the Reading and Better informing ourselves of the Orders of the Company at M <sup>r</sup> James Walleys	0 9 7
1736	May 11	P <sup>d</sup> for a Gill of Wine for a brother being sick	0 0 3
	Sep 14	P <sup>d</sup> for 4 horses to Ride the City Bounds	0 7 0
1737	Sept 3	Spent at the Fenix when the Levetenant of Ireland went over	0 12 0
1739	Oct 27	Paid at Mr Goulding at Declaring War <sup>16</sup>	0 11 3
		Paid for carrieing the Cullors and horse	0 2 0

<sup>16</sup> War declared by England against Spain, October 23rd, 1739.

		Paid for 4 Horses at the Declaration of War	o 4 0
1744	April 2	Gave for carrieng the Colours Declaring War <sup>17</sup>	o o 6
1746	Oct: 9	Spent at the Pied Bull the Rejoyceing Day	o 10 6
1748	Dec 22	Spent at the Coach & Horses on proclaiming Peace	o 16 7
1749	Aprill 26	Spent the Thanksgiving Day	o 8 0
1754	May 29	To the Bellman for crying the Skins	o 1 0
1756	May 24	Spent at the Royal Oke at the Declaration of War against France	o 18 9
		For 3 Horses	o 3 0
		For carrying the Colours	o o 6
	July	Gave the Mayors Porter	o 1 0
1760	Nov 1	Paid for the hire of 2 horses at Proclaiming his Majesty King George the third	o 4 0
1762	January	To Expences on Declaring War against Spain	o 16 6
1763	May 5	Thanksgiving for the General Peace	o o 6
1764	Jan 23	Paid the postage of the Peti- tion to parliament	o 3 4
1784		Paid postage on 5 letters to & from the Committee in London	o 1 8''

## RULES AND REGULATIONS.

At a general meeting of the members of the Felt-makers and Skinners' Company, held at the Liverpool and Shropshire House in the City of Chester, on the twenty-fifth day of May, 1863, it was ordered and agreed by the members present that the Rules and

<sup>17</sup> Louis XV. declared War against Great Britain, March 14th, 1744.

Articles heretofore made and used for the observance and government of the said Company should from that time be annulled and abolished, and that the following Rules should be thenceforward substituted in their stead, and observed, kept, and performed by the members of the said Company:—

RULE I

“Candidates for admission into this Company must be Freemen of the City of Chester and either born subsequent to the date of their Fathers admission into the Company or by having served seven years apprenticeship to a Member of the Company.”

RULE II

“That the Members of this Company shall meet on Whit Monday in every year at 8 o'clock in the evening at the house known by the sign of ‘The Liverpool and Shropshire House’ situate in Northgate Street in the City of Chester or at any other time and place in the said City as a majority of Members of the said Company at any General Meeting shall appoint.”

RULE III

“That every member on being admitted into the Company if he be admitted on the Annual Meeting day shall pay the sum of £1 10s. od. exclusive of stamp duty and if a Special Meeting be called for that purpose £2 exclusive of stamp duty.”

RULE IV

“That Members resident in the City of Chester shall pay an annual subscription of One Shilling and six pence, non residents Two Shillings.”

RULE V

“That an Alderman and one Steward shall be chosen annually in the place of the retiring Alderman and Steward for the past year, in rotation from the Members of the Company resident in the City.”



## RULE VI

“That the property of the Company shall vest in the Stewards for the time being.”

## RULE VII

“That the duties of the Stewards shall be to call all necessary Meetings and to transact the general business of the Company. All subscriptions and fines to be paid to the Stewards for the time being and be appropriated in the management of the Company.”

## RULE VIII

“That the Stewards for the time being shall have power to report to the Charity Trustees any member whose subscription shall be in arrear at the time the Company are paid.”

## RULE IX

“That any member of the Company receiving another members subscription and not handing the same over to the Stewards at or before the next meeting of the Company shall be brought before such meeting of the Company and fined or otherwise treated as they shall direct.”

## RULE X

“That all disputes and differences which may arise at any Meeting of the Company shall be settled by a majority of the Members then present.”

## RULE XI

“That the Stewards for the time being shall have power to inflict the following fines

## FINES

“Any person applying to be admitted a member of this Company who shall have been entitled to be admitted, and shall have neglected applying for admission for the space of one year or more shall for every year he shall have so neglected pay a fine of Two shillings and Six pence.

Any Member whose subscription shall remain unpaid after the Annual Meeting shall be fined the sum of One Shilling.

Any Member resident in the City not attending the General Meeting (except in cases of sickness) shall be fined the sum of One Shilling.

Any Member attending a Meeting of the Company in a state of intoxication or using improper language shall be fined the sum of Two Shillings and Six pence.

The foregoing Rules approved of by the Aldermen Stewards and Members present this twenty fifth day of May 1863, the seal of the Company being affixed hereto.

JOHN LOWE	}	Aldermen
HUMPHREY MYDDLETON		
WILLIAM SMITH	}	Stewards"
SAMUEL MARSDEN		



#### ALDERMEN AND STEWARDS.

Although reference is repeatedly made to the aldermen and stewards, with the exception of one year, 1675, the names are not given until 1714. This is accounted for by the fact that the earliest book of disbursements now in the possession of the Company commences that year, and it is in these books that the election of aldermen and stewards for the coming year are regularly entered. From 1714 to 1799 they are complete, but from the latter date to 1808 there are no entries. From that time to the present they are regularly entered.

	<i>Aldermen.</i>	<i>Stewards.</i>
Richard Wright	1675	—
John Poole	1675	1721-23
Ralph R. Boulton	—	1675
Humphrey Coppick	—	1675
Richard Dewsbury	1714	1723-25, 1730-32
Jonathan Goldson	1714-18	—

	<i>Aldermen.</i>	<i>Stewards.</i>
John Clayton	—	1714
Benjamin Price	—	1714-16
John Dewsbury	1715-28	—
Thomas Jannions (Jannion) }	—	1715-17
Peter Darwell	—	1717-19
Peter Potter	—	1718-20
Thomas Bridge	1719-31	1751-53
Peter Wrench	—	1720-22
Thomas Stringer	—	1724-25
Peter Parry	1729-41	—
John Welsh	—	1729
Richard Jannion	—	1729
John Cawley	—	1730-32, 1759
Jonathan Gouldson	1732-41	1726-28
John Towsey	—	{ 1733-35, 1745, 1762-63, 1775-76
Richard Wrench	—	1733, 1739-40
Thomas Carter	—	1739-41
Ralph Probert	1742-74	1726-28
James Walley	1742-56	1734-38
William Pemberton	—	1742-45, 1764-67
Charles Parry	—	1746-48, 1760-61
Thomas Smith	—	{ 1746-48, 1794-1800
William Smith	—	1749-50
James Ardern	—	1754-55
Francis Walley	—	1755-58, 1761-62
Edward Burrows	1757-83	1741-44, 1754
Nathaniel Pemberton	—	1769-74
Thomas Jones	1775-83	1736-38, 1763-64
William Hobrow	—	1775-79
Thomas Edwards	—	1780-87
John Gouldson	—	1783-84
Thomas Towsey	1784-1800	1749-53, 1765-74

	<i>Aldermen.</i>	<i>Stewards.</i>
Nathaniel Dewsbury	1784-93	1756-60, 1768
Joshua Smith	—	{ 1788-93, 1808-9, 1811-14
William Posnett	—	1790-93, 1808-12
Richard Dewsbury	1794-1800, 1808-17	—
John Edwards	1808-31	1794-1800
John Walley	—	1810
Richard Dean	—	1814-17
John Ainsworth	—	1815-16, 1818-19
[From 1812 to 1833 the Company appears to have been composed of three or four members only].		
Joseph Ainsworth	1832-33	1820-31
Alexander Booth	{ 1834-45, 1847, 1854, 1865-66	} 1817-33, 1850-51
Thomas Woolley	1835, 1846	{ 1834, 1836, 1839, 1842, 1845
Alexander Humphries <sup>18</sup>	} 1836, 1840, 1852-53, 1855	1835, 1838, 1841, 1851
Benjamin Dimelo <sup>19</sup>	1837, 1839	1844
Thomas Marsden	{ 1838, 1841, 1850-52, 1856-57, 1860-61, 1864, 1867-68, 1871-73, 1881-87	1835, 1837, 1840, 1843-44, 1846-47, 1849, 1853-55, 1858-59, 1878-80
Edward Humphries <sup>20</sup>	1842	1839
Richard Gee	{ 1843-45, 1858-59, 1878-80	1856-57, 1860-61, 1865-66, 1870-81
Evan Smith	—	1843 1836, 1838,
William Smith	{ 1846, 1849-50, 1855-56, 1859-60, 1869-70	1840-41, 1847-48, 1852-54, 1857-58, 1862-63, 1867-68, 1872

<sup>18</sup> Admitted to the Company July 29th, 1834. His only son Edward was admitted May 20th, 1839.

<sup>19</sup> Admitted February 3rd, 1836. He is described as an "Increeper," i.e., he was not free to the City.

<sup>20</sup> See note 18, *supra*.

	<i>Aldermen.</i>	<i>Stewards</i>
Humphrey Middleton	1847-48	—
Humphrey Myddleton	1863-65	1861-62, 1869
John Leathwaite <sup>21</sup>	1848-49	1837
John Lowe	{ 1851, 1853-54, 1857-58, 1862-63	{ 1842, 1845-46, 1848-50, 1852, 1855-56, 1859-60, 1864-65
Thomas Edwards	1861	—
John Edwards	1862	—
John Leake	1866-67	—
David Marsden	1868-69, 1876-77	{ 1866-67, 1871-72, 1874-75
Samuel Marsden	1870-71	{ 1863-64, 1868-69, 1876-77
William Edwards	1872-76	—
Edward Lloyd	1874-75	1873, 1882
Edward Myddleton	1877-80	{ 1875-76, 1881-1914
John Bateman	{ 1881-94, 1896-1902,	{ 1870-71, 1873-74,
Myddleton <sup>22</sup>	{ 1904, 1906-12	{ 1877-80
Thomas Bateman	{ —	{ 1887
Myddleton	{ —	{ —
Thomas Humphrey	{ 1888-94, 1897-1906	{ 1886, 1895-96
Myddleton <sup>23</sup>	{ —	{ 1888, 1894, 1897-1900
Charles Lloyd	—	{ 1888, 1894, 1897-1900
Llewellyn Foulk	{ 1895	{ 1883-85
Myddleton	{ —	{ —
Charles Frederick	{ 1895-96	{ 1889-90, 1893
Booth	{ —	{ —
Thomas H. Myddle-	{ 1903, 1905, 1907,	{ —
ton, jun.	{ 1913	{ —
Edward R. Myddle-	{ 1908-14	{ —
ton	{ —	{ —
A. Ll. Myddleton	1914	—

<sup>21</sup> Also written Laithwaite, Lethwaite, and Leathwhite.

<sup>22</sup> In 1891 there were only three members in the Company.

<sup>23</sup> Died January, 1906.

Humphrey Myddleton was admitted to the Company March 23, 1846. From that to the present time some branch of the Myddleton family have been members. From May, 1910, to August, 1914, the Company was composed solely of members of this family, of whom, at the latter date, there were five. At a Meeting of the Company held at the City Grill, August 19, 1914, William Clarke was admitted through servitude to William Edwards; at the same Meeting William Edward Clarke, son of the William Clarke named, was admitted by birth. The minute is signed by:—

“E. R. MYDDLETON } Aldermen  
A. L. MYDDLETON }  
E. MYDDLETON, Steward.”

On March 26, 1914, King George V. and Queen Mary visited the city. This was a red letter day in the annals of the Chester City Gilds. Representatives of the various Companies, including that of the Skinners and Feltmakers, to the number of forty-five, took part in giving a right royal welcome to their Majesties. The Companies met in Hunter Street, and under the guidance of Mr. Frank Simpson marched to the position allotted to them in front of the Town Hall, from whence they had a splendid view of the ceremony.

While the King was inspecting the Guard of Honour, the Queen ascended the dais, and the Mayor called Her Majesty's attention to two historic badges worn by members of the City Gilds; one belonging to the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company, worn by Mr. Walter Washington, and the other possessed by the Merchant Taylors' Company, worn by Mr. William Orrett. Both these gentlemen were called before Her Majesty, who examined the badges, and remarked upon their interesting history. The King expressed a wish to

see the two badges, which he afterwards inspected with interest. His Majesty observed to their wearers that they were very interesting emblems, and that they must take great care of them. Particular attention was paid to the badge of the Smiths, Cutlers, and Plumbers' Company, the King expressing his surprise that it was so well preserved considering its great antiquity.

The writer felt most gratified at the recognition shown to the City Companies, as it was at his request the Mayor, and the Royal Visit Sub-Committee granted a position for representatives of the Gilds.

My thanks are also due to the Chief Constable (Mr. J. H. Laybourne), without whose interest and assistance the presence of the Gilds would not have had such a successful issue.

I am also indebted to my friend, Mr. Horace Davies, A.R.I.B.A., for kindly making me a sketch of the Company's Seal.

